



· THE · STORY · OF ·
· BOHEMIA ·



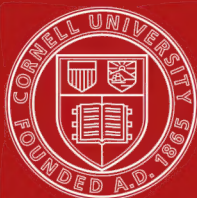
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JOHN HUS BEFORE THE COUNCIL OF CONSTANCE.—See Page 169.

—Frontispiece.

THE STORY OF BOHEMIA

BY

FRANCES GREGOR



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PREFACE.

THE purpose of this little volume is to supply a long-felt want among the Bohemian people; to provide the English-reading public with a concise and trustworthy account of the chief events in Bohemian history. As there is no other work of the kind in the English language, it seems that this one will be gratefully accepted.

The book makes no pretensions to originality. The statements, as far as possible, were taken almost *verbatim* from Tomek and Palacký, and, in many instances, their quotations were also made use of. The Bohemian people have a great number of histories of their nation, large and small,

written in popular style, and also those excelling in profound scholarship; but all these modern works have their sources in Tomek and Palacký, which are the grand repositories of historical information of the Bohemian nation.

In this work references are not given, partly because there would be so many that the pages would fairly bristle with them; but mostly because the book is intended for the ordinary student, whose time is too limited to make a thorough study of this little corner of the world's history. More thorough scholars would go to the larger works, which are published in German, as well as in the Čech tongue.

In regard to names, some deviation has been made from the spelling generally adopted by historians. As the Bohemians are supposed to know best how to spell their own Slavonic names, the original spelling has been, in many cases, retained, in preference to that given by foreigners. Thus, Hus is spelled with one s; Sigismund, Sigmund; Vincenslaus, Václav; Procopius, Prokop; but, in most cases, the name has been translated into an equivalent English one.

Some readers might object that too much space has been allotted to the Hussite wars. The events

in this period of Bohemian history give us a deeper insight into the character of the common people than could be obtained in any other way. During the other periods, the interest seems to circle about the royal family and the nobility, the people being left entirely out of sight; but during the long struggle, known as the Hussite wars, we learn to know the people, their strength of character, their patriotism, and, indeed, all those other virtues that have enabled them to preserve their individuality and their language in the face of the most frightful disasters and persecutions. This important period shows that Bohemia was behind no nation upon the earth in having its due proportion of men "strong in great things."

The book is sent forth with the hope that its pages may remove many a prejudice and misunderstanding, and so contribute its mite to bring about the feeling of the brotherhood of all men.

THE AUTHOR.

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THE STORY OF BOHEMIA.

CHAPTER I.

FROM THE EARLIEST TIMES TO THE INTRODUCTION OF CHRISTIANITY.

THE earliest historical account of the country of Bohemia reaches back into the fourth century B. C. According to Tacitus, the Boi, a Gallic tribe, crossed the Rhine, settled in this region, and from them the country derived its name.

The Boi were the fiercest of the Gallic tribes. Being far removed from the influence of Rome, they knew none of the luxuries of civilization, and consequently were more hardy and able to withstand the attacks of the surrounding tribes. Finally, weakened by internal strifes, they were overcome, scattered, and passed away from the country, leaving no trace of themselves but a few names; such as Vltava, Moravia, Brna, Beroun, and others.

The Boi were succeeded by the Marcomanni, who held the country till about the beginning of the fifth century A. D., when they in their turn were driven out, and the country was settled by a Slavic race. They came from the east, under the leadership of Čech, and finding the country uninhabited, decided to make it their home. They called themselves Čechs, from their leader, and the country Čechy; but the sur-

rounding Germanic tribes continued to call the country Bohemia, from the Boi, and the people Bohemians.

The Slavs, and hence also the Čechs, were of medium size, heavily built, had dark-blue eyes, round faces, fair complexion, and brown hair. They were a hardy race, patiently enduring all hardships; such as hunger and thirst, heat and cold. They were experts in regard to rowing and swimming. They lived in settled communities, engaged in raising cattle, agriculture, and various mechanical arts. They built their houses of hewn timber, seeking the most solitary places for their location, in order to escape the depredations of roving, warlike tribes. For themselves, they loved not war, and took up arms only in self-defense.

The country being surrounded by Germanic tribes, that subsisted mostly by plundering their neighbors, the Čechs suffered much from the inroads made into their territory; and, doubtless, would have been destroyed, and passed away from the earth unknown to history, like many other nations before them, had they not found a mighty deliverer in Samo, one of the greatest warriors of that age.

Samo came from the land of the Franks, but it is supposed that he was a Slav, and went to the Bohemians to escape the destruction or bondage that threatened him from the overwhelming numbers of his enemies. The Avers, at this time, rising against the Bohemians, Samo carried on a long and bloody war against them, until their power was forever broken. The nation, out of gratitude, made Samo their ruler; and for many years lived in peace and security.

This great warrior attempted to establish a Slavic State, whose center should be Bohemia. He carried on many wars, especially with the Franks. The king of the Franks, Dagobert, sent messengers to Samo demanding that restitution be made to some of his subjects, who claimed that they had been wronged by the Slavs. As Samo would not grant the request, the Franks prepared for war, calling to their aid the Longobards and Allamans. The southwestern part of Bohemia was soon overrun by the enemy; and for a while destruction seemed to threaten the country. But Samo, having prepared his army, made a fierce attack upon them; a battle, raging for three days, was fought at Domaslitz (Taus), in which the Franks were totally defeated and compelled to flee, leaving their baggage behind them.

After the death of Samo, for a period of about 150 years, very little is known of Bohemia. The great State he had established was broken up, the Servians, Moravians, Čechs, and other tribes, that had been subject to him, became independent, living under their own rulers and princes.

The few historical facts in regard to this period are collected from tradition, from songs, from contemporary histories of other nations, and from Krok and his daughters. The poems of the Queen's Court manuscript. Although there is little authentic history in regard to Krok and his daughters, their names are so interwoven into the literature of the country, that some knowledge of them is indispensable to the thoughtful student.

Krok was the ruler of Bohemia about a hundred years after Samo. On account of his valor and wisdom, he was greatly beloved; and people from far and near

came to him to settle their controversies. He had three daughters, Kasa, Tetka, and Libuse, who also were renowned for their learning and wisdom. Palacký remarks that it is very probable that Krok either had sent his daughters to other lands to be educated, or had obtained teachers for them to instruct them in all the learning of the day.

Kasa was well versed in the knowledge of plants, especially in regard to their medicinal powers; she also excelled in the mechanic arts and occupations. Although she was looked upon as a witch, she was nevertheless held in great honor.

Tetka was the priestess of the nation. Besides conducting religious services, she instructed the people about their gods, and the manner of worshipping them. The fortress Tetin, not far from Beroun, was named after her.

Libuse, the youngest, excelled her sisters in both gifts of mind and heart. Having a wide reputation for wisdom, deep penetration of mind, and great beauty and strength of character, she was greatly beloved, and when her father died, was chosen to be his successor. She ruled her people in a wise, statesmanlike manner. Her court was held in Vyšehrad, the ancient seat of government. On occasions of great moment, all three sisters sat together for judgment.

The people loved Libuse, and rendered her unquestioning obedience. This, however, did not last. The trouble arose out of a quarrel two brothers had over their inheritance. According to the laws of the land, the property had been divided equally between them; but this did not satisfy the elder, who claimed he ought to have a larger share. As the princess could not grant

his request without violating the ancient customs, he became rebellious; found fault with her whole government, and finally, before all the people, cursed the land that was governed by a woman, and pointing to the neighboring nations—the Germans—declared that there the laws were just, since the country was governed by *men*. Libuse, perceiving that Chrudos would not have dared to speak to her thus, had he not had moral support among the other men, at once resigned her authority, and advised them, if the hand of a woman was too light to rule them, to choose a man. This, however, they refused to do, but asked her to choose a husband, and that the two could rule conjointly, and that the nation would be obedient to them.

Libuse sent messengers to a certain peasant in the village of Staditz named Premysl, offering him her hand and the government of the country. He received the message joyfully, and, leaving his oxen in the field, he mounted the horse they brought him, and rode to Vysehrad to meet his future wife.

Premysl* was the first ruler of the dynasty of the Premyslides, who ruled Bohemia for six centuries.

Premysl proved to be a wise and able ruler. He passed many new laws for the government of his people. Indeed, the ancient writers were in the habit of referring the old laws to the reign of Premysl and Libuse. After her marriage, Libuse founded the city of Prague, prophesying its future greatness and glory.

To this period belongs the curious story of the war

* NOTE.—Among the Slavs, when a prince was initiated into his office, he was clothed in plain garments and led to the seat or throne prepared for him, and not until then was he allowed to assume his princely robes. This was to show that princes came from the people, and hence derived their authority from them.

that the women carried on against the men. It was ^{The Maidens' War.} related that after Libuse's death, the women were not satisfied with the government of the men, and so determined to cast off their authority. Vlasta, who had been one of the friends of Libuse, became their leader, and under her able generalship many brilliant victories were won. At first the men felt inclined to treat this uprising with scorn; but seeing how determined the women were, and what success crowned their deeds of valor, they became thoroughly roused, attacked the stronghold of Devin* with great fury, and compelled the women to surrender. Thus the power of woman was forever broken in Bohemia, and from that time on she was compelled to occupy an inferior position.

BOHEMIA AND CHARLEMAGNE.

After the coronation of Charlemagne in 800, he was more zealous than ever in his work of Christianizing the surrounding nations, Bohemia being included in that number. In 805 a vast German army invaded the country, offering Christianity or death to the terrified inhabitants. The Bohemians, taken by surprise, were not prepared for war; consequently, dared not meet the enemy in open battle. They therefore resorted to a guerrilla mode of warfare. Forming themselves into small bands, they fell upon the enemy from their hiding-places, killed all they could, and, before the enemy recovered from its surprise, they were gone. The army remained in Bohemia for forty days; but, with the exception of devastating the

* Maidenfort.

fields, it accomplished nothing. The following year another expedition was fitted out, but met with no more success than the first. Charlemagne did not succeed, either in compelling the Bohemians to accept baptism or to pay tribute. Christianity was introduced into the country later, but from another direction, and by quite a different method—it came to Bohemia from her sister province of Moravia.

Under the government of Samo, Moravia and Bohemia had been united; but after his death, each became independent. To escape the ravaging army of Charlemagne, the Moravian princes had accepted him as their liege lord. About the middle of the ninth century, Prince Moimir ruled in Moravia. He accepted Christianity, and, by remaining faithful to his lord, Louis the Pious, secured peace for his dominions.

CHAPTER II.

FROM THE INTRODUCTION OF CHRISTIANITY TO THE REIGN OF PREMYSL OTTOKAR II.

BEGINNING OF CHRISTIANITY IN BOHEMIA.

IN regard to Christianity, Bohemia was more fortunate than the German States around her. She received the new religion through instruction, and not, as they had, at the point of the sword.

The first historical account referring to this important subject is that fourteen Bohemian lords went to Ratisbon, and, after being properly instructed, were baptized. It is not even known who these lords were; and yet their action was most important and far-reaching in its consequences. When Christianity was introduced into the country, the Bohemian Church, by virtue of the action of these lords, was placed under the jurisdiction of the bishop of Ratisbon, hence under German influence; and it was through this same influence that the Latin ritual, which the people did not understand, was substituted for the Slavic, which was their mother-tongue.

During the reign of Louis the Pious, both Bohemia and Moravia had peace; but when, at the treaty of Verdun, 843, the empire was divided among the three brothers, all was changed. Louis I, king of Germany, was an enemy of the Slavs, and constantly made war upon them. Not finding Moimir as subservient to his wishes as he desired, he invaded his country, deposed the great ruler, giving the govern-

ment of Moravia to Rostislav, the nephew of the unfortunate prince.

Thus far, all the knowledge that the Moravians possessed of Christianity came from the Germans; but this was quite meager, and the ruler and people were anxious to receive more instruction. Although Rostislav had received many favors at the hands of the German king, he was suspicious of the purity of his motives, and therefore did not wish to turn to Germany in this matter. Finally, it was decided to turn for help to the East. Rostislav sent an embassy to Emperor Michael, of Constantinople, beseeching him to send him Christian teachers. The message they delivered contained the following passages: "The land, indeed, is baptized; but we have no teachers to instruct us and translate to us the sacred books. We understand neither the Greek nor the Latin tongue. Some teach us one thing, and some another; consequently, we know not what to believe. Therefore, we beseech thee to send us teachers who can explain to us the words and meaning of the Scripture."

Wherever the Greeks introduced Christianity, they gave the people the Church service in their mother-tongue, while the teachers sent by the authority of Rome gave it in Latin; and as quite often little more than the service was read, the people remained totally ignorant as to its meaning.

At the time when the embassy was sent to Constantinople, there dwelt in Thessalonica a patrician family; whose head was Leo. This Leo had two sons, Cyril and Methodus, who were renowned for their learning and piety. Being well versed, not only in the

classical languages, but also in the various Slavic dialects, they were able to carry the gospel to the neighboring nations—in fact, were the great missionaries of their day. One great and difficult work that they accomplished was to translate the Bible into Bulgarian, this being still the authorized version for all Slavic dialects. It has the same relation to modern Slavic that Gothic has to German.

When the Moravian embassy laid their petition before the emperor, he was so pleased that he decided to send them as missionaries both Cyril and Methodus, the greatest lights of his Church; and they did not come alone, but brought with them a large number of Slavic disciples. The people were filled with joy when they heard both the Scripture and the Church service in a language that they could understand.

The small missionary band labored with such diligence that, in about four years, all the inhabitants of Moravia, having had the word explained to them, laid aside their heathen practices and became Christians, not only in form, but also in reality.

The brilliant success of this missionary enterprise excited the jealousy of the German priesthood. They complained to the pope that heresy was taught in Moravia; that Church services were held in the Slavic tongue, when it was well known that there were only three tongues in which it was proper to hold such services; viz., Greek, Latin, and Hebrew. Cyril and Methodus were accordingly cited to appear at Rome to justify themselves of the imputed heresy. But when Pope Adrian II heard their case, he not only approved of it, but sent them back to continue the

good work. But before leaving Rome, Cyril was taken ill, and sought refuge in a monastery. Seeing that his end was drawing nigh, he called his brother to him and said: "Behold, brother, thus far we have labored together, drawing the plow in the same furrow; now I fall by the wayside, ending my life. But thou remain in the work of salvation, and let not love for thy home turn thee aside."

Methodus returned to Moravia, and continued his missionary labors; and Christianized Moravia was not without its influence upon pagan Bohemia. The new doctrine gradually spread in that country, and the year 873 marks the time when it may be said to have been formally introduced. In that year, Methodus baptized the Bohemian prince Borivoi, together with his wife, Ludmila, who were then tarrying at the Moravian court. Ludmila became a most devoted Christian, being very zealous in her labors to spread and strengthen the new faith. On account of her goodness, her charity, and humble life, she was greatly beloved by all the people.

SWATOPLUK AND BORIVOI.

In the early days of the history of the country, Bohemia and Moravia were so closely connected that one can not intelligently understand the events in the one country without some knowledge of those in the other.

It was related in a previous chapter how the Germans invaded Moravia, deposed Moimir, and placed his nephew Rostislav upon the throne. Intoxicated by their brilliant success, they determined to march home across Bohemia, without even asking permission of the

ruler of that country. Very probably, they counted upon the favor of the fourteen lords who had been baptized in Ratisbon, for this was before the baptism of the Bohemian prince. The Bohemians, highly indignant that a hostile army dared cross their territory, hastily collected a large army, fell upon the Germans, and defeated them so that they fled, leaving rich spoils in the hands of the victors.

The result of this was a war with Germany that lasted four years. Both parties finally becoming weary of the struggle, the Bohemians sent envoys to the German camp to treat of peace. During the armistice, the worn-out soldiers relaxed their vigilance, and the wily Germans, taking advantage of this, suddenly fell upon them, expecting thus to gain an easy victory. But this foul treachery so maddened the troops that they fell upon the enemy with great fury, and, after a fierce battle, completely defeated them. The Germans were compelled to give up their arms, to leave a large number of hostages, and to return to their country by the way the Bohemians prescribed.

We now return to Moravia. When Louis deposed Moimir, giving the throne to Rostislav, he thought he was gaining a powerful ally; but in this he was mistaken. From the time Rostislav assumed the government, his one aim was to make his country independent of the Germans. He improved the country, extended its boundaries by annexation of the neighboring States; and, in fact, sought to establish a powerful Slavic State. He was, however, unfortunate in that he was not able to arouse the same ambition in his lords; and, in what was still worse, in meeting with treachery in his own family. His nephew Swatopluk,

an ambitious young man, formed a plot to deprive his uncle of the throne. To this end, he entered into an understanding with Carloman, who succeeded Louis, promising to deliver Rostislav into the power of the German ruler. Although the unfortunate ruler discovered the plot, and tried to turn the tables against his perfidious nephew, he was not successful. Swatopluk took him prisoner, and delivered him into the hands of his arch-enemy, Carloman, who put out his eyes and shut him up in a monastery.

The treachery of Swatopluk did not bring him the reward he had expected. The Germans, fearing he would not be any more loyal to them than he had been to his own king, found a pretext for charging him with treason, and cast him into prison to await his trial. In the meantime they again invaded Moravia, causing fearful destruction of life and property. The people, driven to despair, roused all their energies, chose able leaders, and began to defend their country with considerable success. The Germans, in this dilemma, conceived the plan of placing Swatopluk upon the throne, and thus having an ally in that country. They, therefore, began to show him every consideration to heal his wounded spirit. He received their kindness with so much apparent pleasure that Carloman was deceived, and trusted him so far as to place him in command of a large army that was to march against Moravia. As soon as the army reached the walls of Welehrad, Swatopluk entered the fortress under a flag of truce. No sooner did he find himself alone with his countrymen, than he cast aside all dissimulation and explained to them the purpose of his visit. He acknowledged his crime against his uncle,

asked their forgiveness, and agreed to make restitution by delivering the whole German army into their hands.

The prospect of becoming rid of their enemies so easily was too tempting to be rejected ; therefore, the Moravian lords gladly overlooked Swatopluk's former crimes, and accepted him as their lawful ruler. Their army then fell upon the unsuspecting Germans, and defeated them with great slaughter. There was mourning all through Germany, in Austria, Bavaria, Carinthia, and other States; for there was scarcely a hamlet where there was not a son, brother, or husband missing.

Swatopluk knew full well that the Germans would not leave his treachery unavenged; and he at once began to put his country in a state of defense. To obtain the assistance of Bohemia, he allied himself with the ruler of that country by marrying his sister. There was little time to spare; for even while the wedding party was on its way to Moravia, it was attacked by the Germans, but fortunately escaped with a loss of some six hundred horses.

The following year two large armies invaded Bohemia and Moravia at the same time. The Bohemian army, commanded by the Prince Borivoi, having under him five of his lords, was defeated by the Germans and driven as far as the river Moldau. The Moravians were more successful. Although no decisive victory was won, the enemy finally left the country. The next year, Swatopluk himself invading the territory of Carloman, marching as far as the river Danube, peace was made, with quite favorable terms to the Moravians.

After this, Swatopluk was not again troubled by

the Germans; and Bohemia, being under his protection, likewise enjoyed peace. He was a great and able ruler. He enlarged his dominions, so that they extended into Hungary, Silesia, and even as far as the city of Magdeburg.

His administration of justice was so severe, that to this day, in Moravia, "To seek for Swatopluk," means to seek for justice. He died in 894.

The reign of Swatopluk was important, not because he extended his boundaries—for after his death these labors came to naught—but because, in his time, Christianity took deep root, both in Bohemia and Moravia. The great missionary, Methodus, was made the Bishop of Moravia; and, what meant a great deal in those days, the Pope took the Moravian Church under his special protection. This was to shield the Slavic priests against the attacks of the Germans, who constantly tried to bring the new Church under their own jurisdiction. How far their enmity extended may be judged from the fact that they dared to take so renowned a man as Methodus prisoner, keeping him, for a long time, confined in one of their monasteries.

ST. LUDMILA.

When Borivoi and his wife, Ludmila, embraced Christianity, the whole court followed the example set by the rulers, and Bohemia soon became a Christian country.

Ludmila and Borivoi had two sons, Spytihnév and Vratislav. The elder, Spytihnév, first ruled in Bohemia, and was followed by his brother Vratislav. Both brothers were very pious, caring more for the spread of Christianity than for their own glory.

Vratislav married a Lutician princess named Drahomira, or Dogmar. Several children were born to them; but those that became of importance in history were Boleslav and Václav. Václav being the elder, was regarded as the heir to the throne; but his father dying when he was but eighteen years of age, Dogmar seized the government as well as the guardianship of her son. Her ambitious designs were opposed by Ludmila, who, on account of her piety and charity, possessed great influence among the people. She had assumed the whole education of Václav, who loved her more than he did his mother, because he perceived with grief that the latter still leaned to paganism. The trouble between mother and daughter-in-law continuing to increase, the latter resigned all court honors and betook herself to her fortress Tetin, resolved to devote her days to prayer and almsgiving. But the hatred of Dogmar followed her to this retreat. One night, while still at prayers, Ludmila was surprised to see strange, evil-looking men enter her chamber. They were assassins hired by Dogmar to carry out her wicked purpose. Not wishing to shed the blood of the unhappy princess, they seized her veil, twisted it around her neck, and so strangled her.

Dogmar afterwards repented of this crime, and caused a chapel to be built near the place. The body of Ludmila was taken to Prague, and buried in the Church of St. George. On account of her cruel death and her great piety, she has always been regarded as a saint.

ST. VÁCLAV.

After the death of Ludmila, Dogmar for a time was the absolute ruler of the realm, but she soon got into

trouble with the German king, Henry the Fowler, who was at enmity with most Slavic nations. It is supposed that she sent aid to her kinsmen at Luticia, with whom Henry was at war.

When the enemy invaded the country, Václav, although only twenty years of age, assumed control of the government, and prepared to defend the country. The war which followed, although neither very long nor bloody, proved most momentous in its results to Bohemia. When the German army invaded the country, and coming almost to the very gates of Prague threatened destruction to the city, Václav decided to make a treaty of peace. He agreed to place the Bohemian Church under the jurisdiction of the Bishop of Ratisbon, to pay an annual tribute of five hundred pounds of silver and one hundred and twenty oxen. This was in the year 928 A. D., which marks the beginning of that fearful struggle between Germany and Bohemia that lasted for so many centuries, and has not been fought out to this day. There had been war between the two nations before, and doubtless would have been after this, but by this treaty, Václav, so to speak, put the Bohemian nation in subjection to the Germans, and thus gave them a moral right to interfere in the affairs of that nation.

Václav's brother Boleslav, his mother, and many lords protested against this treaty; but he would not heed their counsel. Educated entirely by his pious grandmother, he desired above all things peace, so that nothing should hinder the spread of Christianity in his dominions. Then, too, war was repugnant to his tastes; he preferred to attend church, to help to serve mass, to engage in long prayers, to give alms, and

build churches. He would have made an excellent bishop, but as a political ruler he was a total failure. Nevertheless, he was a popular prince, greatly beloved by his subjects.

Boleslav and his mother Dogmar tried to induce Václav to break the obnoxious treaty; and being unsuccessful, they formed a conspiracy against him.

Being informed of this, he cast his mother into prison; but later, becoming convinced that his suspicions were unfounded, he released her, bringing her back to Prague with great honor. It would have been better had he trusted his mother less; but he learned this when it was too late.

It was the custom of Václav to be present each year at the festivals held on the anniversaries of the dedication of the various churches. On the 27th of September, 935, he went to Boleslav, the city of his brother, to be present at the Church services held on that day. After the service, his brother persuaded him to remain to enjoy with them the festivities of the night. Václav, not dreaming of evil, accepted his brother's invitation. But even then it was not too late to escape his doom, had he been a little more politic. While at the tournament, he was warned that his life was in danger, and advised to flee. But he would not believe that his brother could be guilty of so foul a deed, and the warning was left unheeded.

The next morning, going to early mass, he met his brother at the church door, and after a loving greeting, thanked him for his hospitality and the pleasant entertainment he had given him. Drawing his sword, Boleslav said, " But I have prepared a still more pleas-

ant entertainment for thee to-day," and with these cruel words he struck the unfortunate prince upon the head with his sword. Václav seized his brother, threw him down, saying, "May God forgive thee, brother, for this deed!" Just then the other conspirators rushed out, fell upon Václav, and stabbed him until he lay quite dead. His friends and attendants, except a few who saved themselves by flight, suffered the same fate. When Dogmar heard of the death of Václav, she hurried to the place, fell upon his body and wept bitterly. Being warned that her life, too, was in danger, she fled from the country, seeking refuge with one of her daughters in Croatia.

The body of Václav lay a long time upon the church steps, no one daring to remove it. At length a priest ventured to take it up and lay it out in his own house, and, not being molested, he finally took it to church. The wicked deed being done, Boleslav thought it would be good policy to repent, and therefore he ordered the body to be buried with great honors. Three years later it was taken to Prague, and buried in the St. Vitus Cathedral, where it rests at the present time.

In those days, whenever a crime was committed, the guilty person repented, did penance by devoting a part of the ill-gotten wealth to build a church or endow a monastery, and then lived on to enjoy the rest with a clear conscience. Boleslav, in addition to other penance, devoted his first-born son to a monastic life.

As might be expected, Václav's pious life and cruel death won him the reputation of being a saint. The old chroniclers say: "Václav built churches, richly endowing them, so that the service of God went on

with us continually as among other nations. And God granted him such grace that he could read Latin books like a priest, and likewise Slavonic ones without error. Not only did he know books, but he kept the faith, helping the wretched, feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, protecting widows and orphans, ransoming prisoners, and loving and caring alike for rich and poor."

St. Václav is regarded as the first patron of Bohemia. His image is found on old coins, seals, and banners, and whatever is distinctly Bohemian is generally called St. Václavian.

BOLESLAV I.

X The reign of Boleslav is noted for great centralization of power. From the time of Libuse till to the death of Václav, the form of government remained the same. The Bohémian rulers, generally called princes, were the elders of the people, their power being limited, and their actions governed by the decisions of their lords or lechs, as expressed in their assemblies. The lechs, on the other hand, possessed absolute power upon their own estates, being entirely independent of their prince. This state of things being very detrimental to the central Government, Boleslav early sought means whereby the power of the lords might be weakened and his own strengthened. As some of these lords were even wealthier than their prince, they thought themselves his equals, if not superiors; and Boleslav looked about how he might enrich himself, and so be able to cope with them in this respect. At this time Bohemia was divided into fifty districts, called zupy, and in each district

there was a large tract of land that did not belong to the lords of the zupy, but was regarded as public property. Boleslav seized this public land, with all the improvements upon it, and at once became more wealthy than all his subjects together. In this way he obtained abundant means whereby he might reward the services of men devoted to him. Besides this Boleslav resorted to various other methods, often quite tyrannical, to increase his power, which won for him the surname of "the Terrible." In old histories, up to the time of Boleslav, the lords are spoken of as *duces Bæmanorum*; but after his time, they were called merely *milites*, or *comites*, which signified only public officers.

The attempt of Boleslav to strengthen his power at the expense of the power of his lords was not entirely from selfish motives. He never could forget the disgraceful treaty that his brother, Václav, had made with the Germans; and no sooner had he established and strengthened his power than he prepared to throw off the hated yoke. There was no necessity to declare war; for, since the murder of Václav, the German king, Henry, had deemed it his duty to punish Boleslav, if possible. War was continued, with some interruptions, for fourteen years; but at last Boleslav was compelled to sue for peace, agreeing to pay the same tribute that Václav did.

Boleslav was more successful against his other enemies. At this time (955) the Magyars were committing fearful depredations in the surrounding countries. With an army of 100,000 men, they invaded Germany, going as far as the city of Augsburg, in Suabia. Boleslav sent a small force to the assistance

of the German king, himself taking his stand, with a large army, on the borders of Bohemia. The Magyars, after sustaining a severe defeat from the German army, turned with the remaining forces against Bohemia; but they were met by the army of Boleslav. A severe battle was fought, in which the Magyar army was almost annihilated. Boleslav continued the war, and succeeded in wresting from the Magyars, not only Moravia, but also a part of Hungary, which countries he annexed to his own dominions. He also extended his territories in other directions, obtaining possession of Silesia and a large part of the country around Cracow. He made an alliance of friendship with Mecislav, the ruler of Poland, giving him his daughter, Dubravka, in marriage. Like her great-grandmother, Ludmila, she so excelled in the Christian virtues, and was so zealous in her efforts to spread the gospel, that she soon converted her husband, and thus was the means of introducing Christianity into Poland.

Although Boleslav had gained the possession of the throne through violence, he proved a good and able ruler. He died in 967, and was succeeded by his son, called Boleslav II.

ST. VOJTECH, OR ADALBERT.

Boleslav II was a good and wise ruler, and did much to strengthen Christianity in his dominions. Through his efforts a bishopric was established in Prague. The first bishop was Detmar, by birth a Saxon, but, through long residence in the country, knowing well the Čech tongue.

At this time, Christianity in Bohemia was still

mixed up with many heathen customs. The people said Christian prayers, sang Christian hymns, but at the same time offered sacrifices to their heathen deities. They still buried their dead in the sacred groves, and placed more confidence in wizards than in priests. But, what was worse than all this, they refused to give up the practice of polygamy and intermarriage among relatives, and still sold as slaves captives taken in war. This state of things was a source of much grief to the Christian priests, and especially to the good Bishop Detmar.

At this time, there were in Bohemia two great families, named Slavnikovs and Wirsovs. Both being powerful and wealthy, they had more influence upon political affairs than the ruler himself. But of this more will be said in another connection.

One of the Slavnikov families had a most promising boy, named Vojtech. The boy showed such love for learning that his parents determined to devote him to the Church, and for this purpose sent him to the famous school of Magdeburg. His winning disposition and aptitude for learning gained him the love and admiration of all; and when he was ordained, the Archbishop of Germany, Adalbert, gave him his own name.*

After his ordination, Vojtech went to Prague, to be the assistant to Bishop Detmar. The bishop, in spite of his zealous labors, had not been successful in eradicating the heathenish customs from his country; and this was a perpetual source of grief to him. He feared lest the souls of those lost under his teaching

*From this the curious custom of translating Vojtech to Albert, or *vice versa*, arose.

might be required at his hands. In the enthusiastic young priest he found a ready sympathizer in all his trials; and these, in turn, made a deep impression upon Vojtech's susceptible soul. When Detmar died, Vojtech was appointed his successor, and at once began to labor to establish true Christianity in the country, with even more zeal than his predecessor. In his simplicity of life, his charity, his self-denial, he was indeed a true follower of the Teacher whose doctrines he tried so hard to inculcate. But although the people loved him, and, wherever he went, showed him the greatest honor, they would not give up their pagan customs. Among the higher classes, polygamy was still practiced, and captives taken in war were sold to the Jews as slaves. At last Vojtech became discouraged, and determined to make a journey to Rome to ask the Pope to relieve him of the bishopric. After much deliberation, the request was granted; but when the news of this reached Bohemia, neither Boleslav nor the people would hear of it, but immediately sent messengers to the Pope, begging him to send them back their bishop. Vojtech was accordingly sent back to Bohemia, where he was received with great public rejoicings.

Vojtech, believing that now the people would heed his counsels, took up the work of ministry with more zeal than ever; but his hopes were doomed to a bitter disappointment.

The two great families—the Wirsovs and the Slavnikovs, the family of Vojtech—were constantly at war with each other; and it was an event connected with this family feud that now brought affairs to a crisis, and led Vojtech to resign his office a second time.

The wife of one of the Wirsovs, proving unfaithful to her husband, according to the heathen custom was to be put to death, the wronged husband himself performing the deed. The woman fled, seeking refuge in the church of Vojtech. The enraged Wirsovs surrounded the house, threatening to murder the bishop if he did not give up the fugitive; and the threat, doubtless, would have been carried into effect, had not one of the men bethought himself. He said to Vojtech that he would not help him to a martyr's crown, but that, instead, he would take signal vengeance upon his brothers. At last the hiding-place of the unfortunate woman was discovered; she was dragged out, and beheaded by the public executioner.

With heart-breaking, with grief, and cursing the Wirsovs, Vojtech again left Bohemia, refusing to live in a land where such deeds of cruelty could go unpunished. In justice to Boleslav II, it may be remarked that, at the time this happened, he was suffering from a severe illness, and his son, who favored the Wirsovs, ruled in his stead.

The Wirsovs now made good their threat against the family of Vojtech. They had previously made war upon them, depriving them of all their estates, until they were left with but a single fortress. Here they were attacked by their unrelenting foes, defeated, and all murdered—men, women, and children.

When Vojtech left Bohemia, he went to Rome, determining to end his days in a monastery. But the pope, Gregory V, thought it not well that so able a man should waste his time within cloister walls; and so he again sent him to Bohemia, but on condition that, if the people refused him obedience, he would be

freed from the order, and could go as a missionary to the Prussians. When he returned to Bohemia, the Wirsovs, being in power, sent word to him that he need not return; that they loved not the fault-finder. Vojtech then turned to go as a missionary to the nations along the Baltic, where, at last, he won the martyr's crown. Radim, Vojtech's brother, who had shared all his trials, accompanying him upon his journeys, succeeded in making his escape. He fled to Poland, and related to the Polish king the tragic events of his brother's death. Boleslav immediately sent messengers, who, upon paying a heavy ransom, obtained the body of Vojtech, bringing it to Hnesdau, where it was buried with great honor.

BOLESлав III.

The chief events, in the reign of Boleslav II, were those concerning St. Vojtech, and the strifes between the two families, the Wirsovs and Slavnikovs. Boleslav II died in 999, leaving the throne to his oldest son, also called Boleslav. Besides him, there were two brothers, Jaromir and Ulric.

Of Boleslav III it may be said, as of some of the Jewish kings,—“And he did evil in the sight of the Lord more than they all that were before him.” Being very cruel, he was also cowardly; and fearing that his brothers might win more public favor than he was able to secure, he subjected one to a horrible mutilation, and tried to smother the other in a bath. They escaped with their lives, seeking refuge at the court of the German king, Henry II.

At this time the ruler of Poland was also Boleslav, who, on account of his valor, was surnamed the Brave.

This ruler, seeing that the Bohemian prince was not in favor with his subjects, invaded his territory, and was so successful that he was able to enlarge his own dominions by the annexation of Moravia, Silesia, and Slavonia.

The loss of so much territory had the effect of embittering Boleslav and making him even more cruel than before, until the people could bear it no longer.

In the account given of St. Vojtech, it will be remembered that the Wirsovs were the special favorites of Boleslav. Indeed, one of them was his son-in-law. But these favorites were the very ones to plot an insurrection against him. Vladivoi, the brother of the ruler of Poland, was invited into the country, and the government put into his hands. Boleslav, forsaken by all, sought refuge at the court of France; but having previously done an injury to the French king, the latter, instead of granting the desired hospitality, seized the fugitive prince and cast him into prison.

In the meantime Vladivoi, not feeling secure upon the throne of Bohemia as long as the two brothers of Boleslav were at the German court, determined to seek there the confirmation of his rights. Henry II granted his request, but on condition that he receive Bohemia as a fief from the German king. Thus the country was sold to the Germans, without the consent or knowledge of its people.

The Bohemians soon had ample cause to repent for inviting a foreigner to rule over them; and when, after a short reign, Vladivoi died, they offered the crown to Jaromir, who was still at the court of the German king. After Boleslav III had been released

from his imprisonment in France, he went to Poland and cast himself upon the magnanimity of his chief enemy, Boseslav the Brave. When Jaromir was called to the government of Bohemia, Boleslav III was still in Poland; and the ruler of that country, thinking it would be to his advantage to have a voice in deciding who should sit upon the throne of Bohemia, invaded the country, and compelled the people to receive again their old king. The two princes, Jaromir and Ulric, again fled to Germany. Before leaving the country, the Polish prince effected a reconciliation between Boleslav and his lords.

The reconciliation on the part of Boleslav III was not sincere; for no sooner was his patron gone than he prepared to take signal vengeance upon those who had driven him into exile. In Shrove-tide, 1003, when all the people were engaged in merry-making, Boleslav, too, made a feast, inviting some of the most distinguished people of the realm, among which the Wirsovs were the most prominent. In the midst of the festivities a band of soldiers, headed by Boleslav, entered the hall, and at once began the work of vengeance. All the Wirsovs present were murdered without mercy.

The people stood aghast at this treacherous deed; but as soon as they recovered from their consternation, they sought redress at the court of the Polish king, who had been the means of reseating Boleslav upon the throne. Boleslav the Brave gathered an army, and immediately marched into Bohemia. The tyrant Boleslav, under a pretense of friendship, was decoyed into the Polish camp, where he received, to some extent, the punishment for his crimes. His eyes

were burned out, and he was cast into prison in a strong fortress, where, after many years, he ended his miserable existence. Boleslav the Brave then went to Prague, where he compelled the people to accept him as their rightful ruler.

The Polish yoke, however, soon grew too heavy to bear, and the people turned their eyes to Germany, where dwelt the rightful heirs, Ulric and Jaromir. A secret treaty was made; and while the Polish ruler was away from Prague, carrying on a war with the German king, the two brothers came with an army to the capital, whose gates were opened to them. The garrison left by Boleslav was easily defeated, and Jaromir was established in Prague as the rightful ruler.

Bohemia, although delivered from bondage to the Poles, remained in a most deplorable condition. Jaromir, grateful to the German king both for the long hospitality he had enjoyed at his court, and for the help he had received in gaining the throne, entered into a close alliance with him, which proved a source of much trouble to the Bohemians. The Germans kept encroaching upon their territory, building fortresses upon the very boundaries of Bohemia. The wealth of the country was also continually drained to furnish means to Jaromir to help his ally, Henry II. This creating general dissatisfaction, a conspiracy was formed, Jaromir was driven from the throne, and the government was seized by Ulric (1022). Jaromir, as before, sought refuge at the court of Henry II; but the German king sent him back to Ulric, who completed his act of usurpation and cruelty by putting out the eyes of his unfortunate brother.

Ulric is quite a celebrated figure in literature, on

account of the episode with the peasant maiden Bozena, which is a parallel to the story of "King Ulric and Bozena. Cophetua and the Beggar Maid" of English history. One day, while Ulric was out hunting, he espied a beautiful maiden washing clothes at a spring of water near the village. He was so charmed with the beauty of her face and the grace of her movements that he ordered her to be taken to his castle, where he made her his wife. Having no heir by his first wife, he felt justified in taking a second one. This was about 1010, at which time polygamy was not entirely eradicated from the country. The beautiful poems that celebrate this event, however, never mention the first wife of Ulric.

ST. PROKOP.

During the reign of Ulric, the most illustrious person in the country was the hermit Prokop.

It will be remembered that when Christianity was introduced into Moravia, the German priests did all in their power to substitute the Latin for the Slavic ritual. At first they were not successful; but when Moravia lost her independence, both that country and Bohemia finally succumbed to German influence, and Latin became the language of church service. This was a great loss to the people; for in those days, when learning was shared by only a few, the hearing of the church service in their mother-tongue was a means of considerable edification. Thus it was that when the news spread that a new convent was to be built, where only the Čech tongue was to be used, the whole country was filled with rejoicing, and all the people blessed the ruler who was to grant them this privilege. But although the order for the building of the convent

came from Ulric, the person to whom the thanks were due was the hermit Prokop, or Procopius.

During the reign of Boleslav III, Prokop was a priest at Vyšehrad; but being grieved at the cruelties of his ruler, he left the country, going to Slavonia. While there, he became intimate with a pious monk, who in the church service still used the Slavic ritual, and convinced Prokop that an intelligent worship was more acceptable to God than a mere blind ceremonial. Prokop remained with this monk several years, and the lessons he learned sank deep into his heart. He finally returned to Bohemia, and, seeking a secluded spot in the picturesque region of the river Sazava, he decided to spend his days there as a hermit.

About the year 1031, while Ulric was returning from a hunt, in the depth of the forest he discovered a strange-looking man working in a garden. Entering into conversation with the strange man, he was so affected by his words that he fell upon his knees, begging Prokop to hear his confession. This Prokop willingly did; but when he heard the penitent relate the crimes that he had been guilty of, he prayed long and earnestly that God might forgive him, and, with burning words, exhorted him to a new life. Returning home, and meditating upon what he had seen and heard, it occurred to Ulric that it would be a good plan to build a monastery and a church upon the spot where he had met the holy man; and he at once decided that, in the new church, prayers should be made to God in the same language in which the hermit had persuaded him to turn from his evil ways and begin a new life.

Ulric carried his good resolution into effect. The

church and monastery were built, and, as might be expected, Prokop was appointed the first abbot.

This convent proved to be not only the means of Christian instruction to the people, but in due time it became the center of learning to a large territory. A band of zealous monks gathered around St. Prokop, who instructed youths apt in learning in book knowledge, and in the arts of painting, carving, and architecture. Many Slavonic books were here written, some of which are preserved to this day.

A part of this convent is still standing, forming a beautiful chapel, to which pilgrimages are made every year, upon the same day that the Americans celebrate the anniversary of their independence. The life of St. Prokop is surrounded with numerous legends, which unhappily obscure the real significance of his labors to Bohemia.

BRETISLAV.

Bretislav, the son of Ulric and Bozena[✓], was destined to re-establish the strength and glory of his country. Inheriting his mother's beauty of person and character, and his father's dauntless and enterprising spirit, he early won the admiration of the people, who called him their Achilles.

Even during the life of his father, Bretislav distinguished himself in war against the Hungarians. During the reign of Ulric, similar feuds arose in Poland to those which had existed in Bohemia during the reign of Boleslav III. The brothers of the Polish king, thinking themselves wronged, appealed for help to Stephen, the ruler of Hungary. Taking up their cause, he succeeded in wresting Slavonia and Moravia from the Polish king; but once having it in his power, he decided to keep

it for himself. Seeing this injustice, Ulric seized the opportunity to win back those countries to Bohemia, feeling justified in so doing because the Poles themselves had wrested them from his father's dominions. Bretislav was therefore sent on this expedition. He was so successful in the undertaking that Stephen was glad to sue for peace, and Moravia was again joined to Bohemia.

While upon this expedition, Bretislav came to those places that had been the scenes of the missionary labors of Cyril and Methodus; and seeing the city of Welehrad in ruins, he wept, and resolved that the spoils of the war should be devoted to rebuilding the old churches and renewing the ancient strongholds.

To make his possessions in Moravia more secure, Bretislav undertook a journey to Conrad II, then the German emperor, to seek a confirmation of Bretislav and his rights. While passing through the city Judith of Sweinfurt, he saw Judith, the sister of the Margrave Otto, and was so struck with her great beauty that he determined to win her for his wife, even if he should die in the attempt. Fearing that if he asked for her hand, her proud brother might subject him to much humiliation, he decided to take a shorter and bolder way of winning his bride. As was the custom for noble ladies of those days, Judith was living in a cloister, where she was educated by the monks. Taking a few trusty warriors, Bretislav waited at the church-door where Judith was wont to go to her devotions. As soon as she made her appearance, the bold warrior seized her, placed her before him upon his horse, and galloped away amidst the wild confusion of the monks, whose frantic efforts proved unavailing to prevent the

abduction of their precious charge. Bretislav took the beautiful Judith to Olmutz, where the young couple were married, she having first been made the Duchess of Moravia.

THE REIGN OF BRETISLAV.

In 1037, Ulric died, and Bretislav became the ruler of Bohemia. Having been so successful in the war with Hungary, Bretislav determined to restore his country to its former greatness. As Poland was in a state of anarchy, he determined to invade the country, and, if possible, annex it to his own dominions. He succeeded in taking the city of Cracow, where he found untold treasures, collected there by Boleslav the Brave. He also came to the city of Hnezdau, where rested the remains of St. Vojtech. Bretislav, together with his officers, was seized with a desire to carry those precious relics to Prague; and it would have been done at once had it not been prevented by the Bishop of Prague, who also was in the army. He showed them that this act would be sacrilegious, unless it were done with the greatest solemnity; and insisted that before they touch the relics, they spend three days in fasting and prayer, and solemnly promise to keep all the commands* of the martyr. This promise they willingly made, although it is doubtful whether they kept it. However, the body of Vojtech was taken up and brought to Prague, to the great delight of the people, who rejoiced that the remains of so great a saint should rest among them.

*Some of the things promised by the soldiers were the following: Polygamy given up under penalty of loss of personal liberty; adultery to be punished in the same way; public houses to be destroyed—they were dens of wickedness; no business or manual labor to be performed on Sundays.

While Bretislav was plundering the cities of Poland, Rejcka, who ruled the country in her son's name, appealed for protection to Henry III, who was one of the most powerful rulers of his age. He gladly embraced the opportunity to meddle in the affairs of Bohemia; and at once declared war against Bretislav. This war lasted for several years, and in the end proved disastrous to the Bohemians. Bretislav was obliged to limit his boundaries to Moravia and Bohemia, and to continue to pay the old tribute of five hundred pounds of silver and sixty yoke of oxen. But after this the Bohemian prince became one of the electors of the Emperor of Germany.

Complaint being brought to the Pope that Bretislav had plundered the churches of Poland, as a penance he built a beautiful church in Old Boleslav, or, as the name has been mutilated by the Germans, Alte Bungslau.

Bretislav was a wise and able ruler. During his reign, many good laws were passed, among which the most important was the one in regard to the succession. Having five sons, he feared lest, after his death, the struggle for the throne might plunge the country into civil war, as had been the case in Poland; with the consent of the State Diet, a law was passed declaring that the oldest of the Premysls should inherit the throne, whether he came in the direct line of descent or not.

SPYTIHNĚV II.

Bretislav died in 1055, and was succeeded by his oldest son, SpytihnĚv, who is known in history as the second of that name, the first SpytihnĚv having ruled but a small part of Bohemia, during the time when the

Moravian prince Swatopluk was lord over both Moravia and Bohemia.

Like his father, Spytihnév possessed great beauty of person. He was tall, had a ruddy complexion, black hair, and a long flowing beard. He was generous and noble, but very severe and just. This justness, however, was mostly towards his own people; for as soon as he assumed the government he passed an edict ordering all Germans to leave the country, including his own mother, Judith, who sought refuge with her son Vratislav, in Moravia. This severe measure seemed to have been specially directed against some lords who had been his father's courtiers, and had done the young prince some personal injury. Some time after this, this same ruler drove away the Slavonic monks from the Sazava monastery, placing the institution in the hands of Germans. The fugitive monks, with their abbot, Vitos, who was the nephew of St. Prokop, the founder of the institution, betook themselves to Hungary, where they remained till they were recalled during the reign of King Vratislav I. The historian Kosmos, being personally acquainted with Spytihnév, says many things in his praise. He was the protector of widows and orphans, who never appealed to him in vain.

VRATISLAV I.

Spytihnév died in 1061, when he was but thirty years of age; and his brother Vratislav, being the oldest of the Premysl family, was declared the ruler, according to the law of succession passed during the reign of Bretislav. There were three more brothers, Otto, Conrad, and Jaromir. Otto and Conrad received possessions in Moravia, but Jaromir had been destined

for the Church, with the agreement that when the Bishop of Prague died he should be appointed his successor. Jaromir was a spirited young man, who preferred hunting to prayer, and not receiving any lands, he went to Poland, where he spent his time in the gayeties of life at court.

The Bishop of Prague dying, the lords sent word to Jaromir to return to his country, that the bishop's chair was awaiting him. Jaromir accordingly returned, was accepted as the bishop by the lords, but was waiting to receive the confirmation of his office from Vratislav.

A Diet was held at Nachod, the lords with their bishop waiting for the ruler to perform the act of confirmation; but what was their amazement when they saw Vratislav call to the throne Lanzon, a German, and extend to him the scepter and ring as the sign that he accepted him as bishop. Kojata, one of the chief lords, turning to Otto, exclaimed: "Why standest thou here like a block, and dost not take thy brother's part? Seest thou not that one of princely blood is pushed aside, and a stranger, who came into the country ragged, is placed into the bishop's chair? But if our prince breaks his father's oath, we at least shall not make our fathers perjurers in the sight of God. We are ready for any undertaking rather than consent to the choice of this German." Smil, the lord of Zatec, spoke in a similar manner, and then, taking Jaromir and the other two princes by the hand, they led them out of the assembly, followed by many other lords. Vratislav, seeing that the friends of Jaromir were preparing for armed resistance, went to Prague, whence he sent messengers to his brother, promising to confirm him in the bishopric.

Jaromir proved a good bishop, being very conscientious in the discharge of the duties of his office. He was very kind to the poor, giving abundant alms; but poor clerical students were the special objects of his care, and he spared no pains to help them to become thoroughly prepared for their high calling. Although Jaromir was a very faithful bishop, he did not succeed in laying aside his spirited disposition. A dispute arising between him and the Bishop of Moravia in regard to some estate that both claimed, Jaromir went to Olmutz, entered the house of that prelate with an armed force, and himself beat the unfortunate man. For this act of violence he was cited to Rome, and humbling himself duly before the Pope, he finally succeeded in obtaining absolution, but not the estate in question. Upon returning home, he took possession of the estate; but the Pope finally settled the difficulty by dividing it equally between the two bishops.

During the reign of Vratislav occurred that memorable quarrel between Pope Gregory VII and Henry IV of Germany about the question of investitures. Vratislav took the part of the emperor, sending him three hundred picked men to aid him in the expedition against the Pope. This small force did good service, and were the very first to scale the walls of Rome, for which gallant deed, the leader, Wiprecht, was rewarded by receiving Judith, the daughter of the Bohemian prince, in marriage. Vratislav also did good service to the emperor by defeating Leopold, the Duke of Austria, who had rebelled against Henry while the latter was away on the expedition to Rome.

In consideration of these services, Henry gave Meissen to Vratislav, and further honored him by

giving him the title of King of Bohemia. Up to this time the rulers of Bohemia had been called princes or dukes, as was also the case in regard to Moravia. Henry further rewarded Vratislav by making his brother Jaromir (Gebhart) chancellor of the realm, and provided that at the death of the Bishop of Moravia, the two bishoprics should be reunited. Finally he accepted four thousand pounds of silver as full payment for all the tribute that Bohemia should ever pay to the empire; but after that the king was to furnish three hundred men to accompany the emperor whenever he went to Rome for his coronation.

Vratislav had been called King of Bohemia by the German Emperor; but this title did not seem real as long as he had not been crowned. Therefore, as soon as he returned from the wars, The Coronation of Vratislav. grand preparations were made in Prague for this ceremony. June 15, 1086, Prague was the scene of the grandest celebration Bohemia had ever seen. Both Vratislav and his wife Svatava were crowned in the St. Vitus Cathedral. The people shouted: "Blessing, victory, and glory to Vratislav, the great and gracious King of Bohemia and Poland, crowned of God!" The title King of Poland was but nominal, being given by the emperor to show Bohemia's supremacy over that country.

Vratislav reigned six years after his coronation. He had five sons, and for some time he thought of breaking the Bretislav law of succession in favor of his oldest son Bretislav; but the young man bringing upon himself the wrath of his father by murdering the favorite courtier of the latter, the crown was finally given to Conrad, the brother of Vratislav.

Vratislav, being a firm ally of Henry IV, many German noblemen and other dignitaries came to Bohemia, and, consequently, numerous German customs were introduced into the country. During his reign, the first German settlement was made in Prague, the privilege having been purchased from the king.

In 1092, Vratislav lost his life by falling from his horse while out hunting. His body was buried in the beautiful church of St. Peter and Paul that he himself had built and endowed.

At the very beginning of his reign, Vratislav righted the wrong that had been done by his brother to the

Slavonic monks of St. Prokop's monastery
Bozetch. at Sazava, by calling them back and reinstating them in their old position. They had a very famous abbot named Bozetch. He was a very learned man, and comprehending the spirit of the founder of the monastery, he made it the seat of learning as well as of art. He was himself well skilled in sculpture, wood-carving, and architecture. He made many beautiful ornaments for the church, and also drew out the plans for several churches. On account of his devotion to the Church and his benevolent disposition, he was greatly beloved, not only by the people, but also by the king, who was a frequent visitor to Sazava. A curious incident is related of Bozetch that shows the jealous disposition of the higher clergy even at this early date. While the abbot was serving mass and the king kneeling before the altar, he took the crown and laid it on the king's head. As this honorable duty belonged only to the bishop, that dignitary was so offended that he resolved to impose a severe penance upon the presumptuous abbot. He accordingly ordered

Bozetch to make a wooden cross as large as himself, and carry it upon his shoulders to Rome. Bozetch obeyed, and so won back the favor of his superior.

BRETISLAV II.

After the death of Vratislav, his brother Conrad ascended the throne; but, dying within eight months, he was succeeded by Bretislav, the oldest son of Vratislav.

The reign of Bretislav II is noted for the efforts he made to root out the last remnants of paganism. The sacred groves were cut down, the dead buried in consecrated ground, and wizards and fortune-tellers driven from the country.

It was during the reign of this king that the Crusades began. Many of the Crusaders, coming from the Rhine provinces, marched through Bohemia, causing much trouble by their lawless behavior. As usual, the chief objects of their persecution were the Jews. While in Prague, they tried to compel them to be baptized; and when they refused, they were beaten and robbed, the authorities either not caring, or being unable to prevent such lawlessness.

King Bretislav brought much evil upon the country by attempting to violate the law of succession. According to law, his successor should have been Ulric, the son of Conrad, who, it will be remembered, reigned but eight months; but Bretislav determined that his own brother should be his successor. The two brothers, Bretislav and Borivoi, therefore, undertook a journey to the German emperor, to obtain his assistance in securing the throne. Henry IV gladly granted this request, since, by so doing, he ex-

exercised a right that in the future could be taken as a precedent, and thus give him a plausible right to interfere in Bohemian politics. As Ulric ruled in Moravia, as soon as Bretislav returned he invaded that country, drove Ulric away, and established Borivoi in the government.

Shortly after this, Bretislav perished by a violent death. Returning home from a hunt, when he was passing through a dense wood a strange horseman rushed out and thrust Bretislav through with his spear. The people regarded this as a punishment from heaven for his unjust treatment of his kinsmen. The assassin was found, but mortally wounded with his own dagger.

BORIVOI.

As soon as Borivoi heard of the death of the king, he hastened to Bohemia to take possession of the throne. As soon as he left, the fugitive Ulric returned, and regained the government of Moravia, and prepared to invade Bohemia. Following the example of his rival, he, too, went with rich gifts to the emperor, and the latter, in turn, granted him the fief of Bohemia. But as he received no material support, his expedition against Bohemia did not prove successful, and he returned home, giving up all aspirations to the throne.

Borivoi proved a good ruler, being greatly beloved by the people; but he was a weak man, easily influenced by others, and unable to protect himself against their intrigues.

Swatopluk, the Duke of Olmutz, belonged to a younger branch of the Premysl family. Being a bold and ambitious young man, he determined to secure

for himself the crown of Bohemia. Not having the shadow of any legal right to the crown, he was obliged to resort to intrigue. He bribed the burg-masters of some of the most important fortresses, invaded the country, marching to the very gates of Prague. He expected that the fortresses of Hradschin and Vyšehrad would be delivered into his hands; but, being disappointed in this, he was obliged to leave the country, feeling much chagrined at the miscarriage of his plan.

But Swatopluk's ambitious spirit was not to be daunted by one failure. He soon formed another plan, far deeper and more treacherous than the first. In one of his courtiers he found a willing tool to carry out his scheme. This wretch came to Borivoi as though he were fleeing from the wrath of his master, and begged the king to take him under his protection. Remaining at the Bohemian court, he soon won the confidence of Borivoi, and succeeded in turning him against his best friends, including his own brother, Vladislav, and the powerful Wirsov nobles. Vladislav, being estranged from his brother, entered into an agreement with the usurper, promising to remain neutral in the coming contest, in consideration of which, the latter, if successful, would declare him his immediate successor. Swatopluk then invaded the country the second time, and the king, forsaken by his friends, was obliged to flee from the country. As usual, he sought refuge at the court of the German emperor, and, promising great rewards, he succeeded in persuading that ruler to take up his cause. Swatopluk was therefore ordered to appear before his liege lord, as the emperor now claimed to be, and give an

account of his deeds. Fearing to disobey so great a monarch, he went to Germany ; but no sooner had he made his appearance at the court than he was seized and cast into prison. But Swatopluk had powerful friends at home, who would not leave him to languish in prison. The emperor wanted 10,000 pounds of silver for his ransom, and as the court treasury was empty, churches, merchants, and private families were robbed to raise the required amount. The sum was paid, Swatopluk returned to Bohemia, and resumed the government without any further opposition.

THE MASSACRE OF THE WIRSOVS.

The Wirsov family, although not spoken of often in so small a work as this, nevertheless played an important part in the earlier history of Bohemia. Being very wealthy and powerful, they often indulged in ambitious schemes, and consequently were regarded with suspicion at the court. When Swatopluk usurped the throne, there was war between the German emperor and the Hungarians and Poles, and the Bohemian king, in consideration of the services done him by the emperor, was obliged to render him his assistance. In this war, the two most powerful Wirsov lords, Bozej and Mutina, were placed in command of the army on the Polish frontier, and, being attacked by Boleslav, the Polish prince, they were obliged to fall back into Bohemia. At this time Swatopluk was in Hungary, and, hearing the news, he started home, fearing lest a worse disaster befall his armies. On the way home he was met by secret messengers, who informed him that the recent defeat of his forces was due to the treachery of the Wirsovs,

who had entered into a secret alliance with the Polish ruler. Swatopluk himself, being of a very treacherous character, easily believed in the treachery of others, and so he at once determined to take signal vengeance upon the Wirsovs. On this homeward journey, Mutina, with his two sons, came to meet his king, and was received most cordially. The whole party remained all night at the fortress of Breslau. The next morning the king ordered his lords to meet him in the banquet hall, and when they were all together, he entered, and began to denounce the whole race of Wirsovs, charging them with all manner of crimes. He then turned to his hired murderers, and ordered them to begin the work of death. Such a consternation fell upon those present that for a moment a deathlike silence reigned in the hall; but it was only for a moment, for the assassins were thirsty for the blood of their victims. The Wirsovs present, together with all their friends and attendants, were murdered without mercy. Then the bloody men mounted their horses, and galloped off to Libitz, the chief seat of the Wirsovs, to continue the work of death. When the warden announced that a body of horsemen were coming to the fortress, Bozej said: "It's our soldiers from Hungary; in God's name let them enter." The assassins repaid the kind welcome by murdering the inmates and plundering the fortress. But the Wirsov family was very large, the members living upon their estates in various parts of the country; and as Swatopluk had made the determination to exterminate the whole race of Wirsovs, the work of butchery lasted for many days. They were hunted down like wild beasts; some were found and

publicly executed in Prague, and some chased and killed in the streets of the city. The historian Kosmos relates how the headsman tore two beautiful boys out of their mother's arms, and cut their throats in the market-place. The people, seeing this horrible sight, crossed themselves and fled, fearing the vengeance of God. It was estimated that some 3,000 souls perished in this massacre.

The perpetrator of this monstrous crime did not long outlive his victims. While on an expedition to Hungary, in passing through a forest, he lost his eye by striking his head against the limb of a tree. The following year, while helping the emperor in the war against the Poles, he remained in the tent of that prince till dark, and, while returning to his own camp, a strange rider joined his guards without being observed. Just as they emerged from the woods, the rider approached Swatopluk, and, ere the latter was aware, he was thrust through with the spear, and fell dead from his horse. The strange rider was never found; but it was supposed that he had been hired to commit the deed by John, the son of Tistova, the only one of the Wirsovs that had succeeded in escaping from the country.

It will be remembered that the Wirsovs had exterminated the Slavnikov family, and that it was their cruelty that had driven St. Vojtech from the country.

VLADISLAV I.

The sudden death of Swatopluk threw the country into a state of anarchy. The evil precedent established by Bretislav in violating the law of succession now proved the cause of endless misery to the

country. The struggle for the crown commenced immediately, even in the camp, and almost in the presence of the enemy. There were several candidates, and each tried to win the favor of Henry V, then in the camp, by rich presents and extravagant promises. Henry accepted all the gifts, giving in return many fair promises, but finally decided to aid Vladislav, the brother of Borivoi, who, it seems, was able to offer the highest bribe; namely, 500 pounds of silver. The disappointed candidates determined to defend their rights with the sword, and civil war was the result. Brothers fought against brothers, sons against fathers, old friends plundered each other's estates, and the whole land was plunged into the utmost misery. Finally, the other candidates dropping off, Borivoi, the brother of Vladislav, alone remaining, the latter became reconciled, and willingly abdicated the throne in favor of Borivoi. This friendship, however, was of short duration. Vladislav again seized the throne, and Borivoi fled into foreign lands, where he remained till he died.

Vladislav was a kind-hearted man, and, as far as lay in his power, he tried to make good the losses sustained by the people during the civil war. His younger brother, Sobeslav, who had again and again plotted against him, was called to court, forgiven, and Vladislav even went so far as to persuade his lords to name Sobeslav as his successor.

SOBESLAV I.

The family of Premysls, unlike most royal families, seemed to increase in a geometrical ratio, and, the law of succession being ignored, there was a continual

struggle between the older members as to who should become the ruler. Each candidate sought to win the favor of the ruling prince, since his approval had considerable influence upon the election. Thus Sobeslav, being acknowledged by Vladislav as his successor, mounted the throne without any opposition. But one candidate refused to give up his claims. This was Otto the Black, the brother of Swatopluk. Otto the Black had expected to obtain the crown at the death of Swatopluk, and, being disappointed, he determined that now, at least, the prize should not elude his grasp. He therefore appealed to Lothair, who was now Emperor of Germany.

Like his predecessors, the reigning emperor was glad of the opportunity to meddle in the affairs of Bohemia, and so at once summoned Sobeslav to appear before him and explain how he dared accept the crown of Bohemia without the consent of the emperor. Sobeslav replied to the messengers as follows: "I hope, through God's mercy, and through the help of St. Vojtech and St. Václav, that our country shall not be delivered into the hands of strangers." In order that this confidence might not appear to be misplaced, he immediately began to make vigorous preparations for war. Being a popular prince, soldiers flocked to his standard from all sides, and soon he was ready to meet the enemy. In the winter of 1126, Lothair invaded the country on the borders of Saxony. A bloody battle was fought in which the Germans were totally defeated, and Otto the Black, the candidate for the crown of Bohemia, fell mortally wounded. A treaty of peace was made by which Lothair agreed never to ask more of the Bohemians than the privilege of confirming the

elections that they made. The two rulers then became fast friends.

The war being over, Sobeslav turned his attention to internal improvements. He built and endowed churches and monasteries, and in all possible ways encouraged art and learning. In those days, Church and education were closely connected, the churches having elementary schools connected with them, and the monasteries being the seats of higher education, where painting, music, and sculpture were cultivated, and books written and transcribed. In the twelfth century there were many collegiate churches in Bohemia, where promising young men could obtain a good education. But those that desired to stand side by side with the great scholars of other nations, usually went to Paris or to some of the universities of Italy.

Sobeslav, seeing that the law of succession was continually violated, determined to go back to the old law of primogeniture, his personal interests doubtless having something to do in this decision, since then the choice would fall upon his own son Vladislav. The Diet approved of the plan, and Vladislav was accordingly elected. As he was a young man of strong character, who would be likely to rule the country without much regard to the wishes of the nobles, they protested against the election, and chose another Vladislav, the son of the previous Vladislav, as the successor of Sobeslav, believing that, both on account of his mild disposition and his gratitude to them, he would have so much regard to their wishes that they would really be the rulers of the kingdom. Sobeslav died in 1140, and Vladislav, having the lords upon his side, ascended the throne without any opposition.

VLADISLAV II.

As soon as Vladislav assumed the government, the lords discovered that they had entirely misunderstood his character. He proved to be a man of sound judgment and of great independence of character, and began to rule the country without any regard to the wishes of those by whom he had been chosen. The indignant nobles met, declared Vladislav incapable of government, deposed him, and elected in his place, Conrad of Znojem. Civil war again followed this election. Vladislav refused to give up the throne, and prepared to defend his rights by force of arms. Conrad gathered a large army in Moravia, and invaded Bohemia. A severe battle was fought at Males, in which Vladislav was defeated, so that he was obliged to fall back to Prague. Leaving his brother Depold in command of the city, he went to Germany to seek the assistance of the emperor, with whose aid he was finally reinstated in the government.

During this war, there was fearful devastation of the country, and much confusion in regard to the ownership of property. As this, in many cases, touched church property, the Pope sent his legate, the Cardinal Guido, to settle the difficulties. The Bishop of Olmutz had been deprived of his income because he would not join the malcontent lords, who now were compelled to make good to him his losses. Cardinal Guido also succeeded in effecting a reconciliation between Vladislav and the rebellious lords. They did him homage, and he gave them back what possessions he had in his power.

Many new regulations were introduced into the

country, and the law of Gregory VII, in regard to celibacy was now enforced, the priests being given the alternative either to leave their wives or their Churches. Many priests, holding high positions in the Church, had up to this time lived in open violation of the law, and even now it was not fully obeyed. In fact, married priests were found in Bohemia even in the reign of Charles IV, in the fourteenth century.

During the reign of Vladislav began the second great Crusade. Conrad III of Germany, and Louis VII of France, took up the cross, and the Bohemian prince joined the expedition with many of his chief lords.

The Prince of Saxony, Henry Leo, aided by some Moravian lords and by Bishop Zdik, also undertook a crusade, but not to the Holy Land. They went to the Slavic tribes of Lutetia and Pomerania to compel them to accept Christianity ; but they met with such spirited resistance that they returned home without accomplishing anything.

The Crusade to the Holy Land also proved a failure. Vladislav, leaving his troops under the command of the French king, started for home, stopping on the way at Constantinople, where he made a treaty of friendship with the Greek emperor.

Having seen many lands, and learned much that could benefit his people, Vladislav might now have used his experience for the good of his country ; but he was a warlike man, and preferred military glory to the welfare of his subjects.

Being home but a short time, he undertook another military expedition. He prepared an army to aid the German emperor to subdue the city of Milan, that was trying to gain its independence ; for which

service the emperor promised to grant him the title of king, and to all the rulers of Bohemia after him. But the Diet refused to grant him the money to pay the necessary expenses ; and, moreover, declared that he could not, according to the laws of the country, take the troops across the boundary without the consent of the State Diet. But the intrepid warrior was not to be turned from his purpose so easily ; he raised an army of 10,000 volunteers, fitting them out at his own expense.

The Bohemians distinguished themselves greatly in this expedition, the fame of their valor spreading to all parts of Europe ; but, aside from this, it proved of no practical benefit to the country.

Vladislav undertook several more military expeditions, winning great renown. But he was not sustained in this by the most thoughtful men of his realm ; they could not see that any benefit came to the country from these wars. Vladislav's success was not due so much to his superior wisdom as to the counsels he received from his adviser, Bishop Daniel. This prelate was more of a statesman and politician than a Churchman. Indeed, his wisdom in regard to matters of state may be inferred from the fact that Vladislav sent him, as a special favor, to the German emperor, Frederick, at whose court he remained many years, being the chief adviser of that ruler.

Although Frederick was bound to Vladislav by so many acts of friendship, yet as soon as Bishop Daniel died he began to intrigue against him. He harbored at his court the two sons of Sobeslav, who had not given up their claim to the Bohemian throne. Vladislav, desiring to keep the crown in his own family,

induced the Diet to elect his son Frederick king of Bohemia, which, being done, he resigned the government into his hands, himself entering a monastery, where he remained till his death, in 1174.

FREDERICK AND SOBESLAV II.

The abdication of Vladislav had not the desired effect; for Emperor Frederick, knowing well the state of affairs in Bohemia, determined that the prince of that country should be of his own appointing. The chief candidate for the throne was Sobeslav, the son of Sobeslav I. During the reign of Vladislav, this prince had invaded Moravia, intending to make that the base of his operations against Bohemia; but, through treachery, falling into the hands of the ruler of that country, he was cast into prison, where he languished till the time when Frederick ascended his father's throne. Emperor Frederick now ordered the King of Bohemia to release Sobeslav, and both to appear before him, that he might decide which one had the better claims to the crown. Sobeslav was immediately released, brought to Prague, and treated with the utmost distinction, Frederick hoping that he might thus win him to himself, and dissuade him from his ambitious designs. But Sobeslav had no notion of giving up his claims. He fled to the emperor, complained that he was not safe in Bohemia, begging that monarch to take up his just cause. King Frederick, being of a somewhat timid disposition, now obeyed the summons of the emperor; and, moreover, tamely submitted when the latter declared Sobeslav to be the rightful heir to the Bohemian throne.

In consideration of these services, Sobeslav was

obliged to fit out an army to aid the emperor in the Italian war.

Sobeslav proved a good ruler, doing all in his power to promote the welfare and prosperity of his subjects. The common people loved him greatly, both on account of his father, Sobeslav I—of glorious memory—and because he was equally kind to the poor and lowly as to the wealthy, who in scorn called him “The Prince of Peasants.” But having spent fifteen years in prison, he had not learned the ways of the world, and consequently was unable to cope with the craft of enemies and the selfish schemes of friends, who continually imposed upon his generosity.

On account of the help that Sobeslav received from the emperor, he was obliged to aid him in the Italian war; but after having spent two years in Italy, losing many men, the emperor was obliged to give up the struggle. Another war broke out concerning the archbishopric of Salzburg. There were two rival claimants for this position, the cause of Archbishop Albert being taken up by Pope Alexander and Henry II, the Duke of Austria, as against the emperor, who had appointed another prelate to the position. Sobeslav fitted out an army of 60,000 men, then invaded the dominions of the Duke of Austria, where he committed such fearful devastations, not sparing churches and monasteries, that he brought upon himself the wrath of the Pope, who excommunicated him, giving his crown to his former rival, Frederick, the son of Vladislav. Frederick invaded the country, and, although Sobeslav defended himself bravely, he was defeated, and compelled to leave the country. The Emperor Frederick, having become reconciled with

the Pope, treacherously forsook his former ally, who had been of so much assistance to him in his wars, and promised to help Frederick to secure the crown. As might be supposed, Frederick had promised the emperor a large sum of money; but the regular sources of revenue having been drained by Sobeslav, he was obliged to resort to new, and often illegal, methods of taxation, which pressed very heavily both upon the common people and upon the nobility. The country being brought to the verge of financial ruin, the nobles arose against Frederick, deposed him, and elected Conrad Otto, of Znojem, his successor. He fled to the German emperor, who took up his cause, threatening the Bohemians with war if they refused to reinstate him in the government. To satisfy Conrad Otto, he gave him Moravia as a fief, thus detaching it from Bohemia, the rulers of which alone had, up to this time, exercised this right. Frederick was by no means satisfied with this arrangement, and as soon as he was well established upon the throne he raised an army, and sent his brother, Premysl Ottokar, to Moravia, to bring the ruler of that country to his former allegiance. A bloody battle was fought, and although Conrad Otto was not completely subdued, he complied with the demands of Premysl rather than longer shed the blood of friends and kindred.

During the reign of Frederick, trouble arose between him and the Bishop of Prague, who tried to free his estates from all taxation and duties to the State. Being opposed in this by Frederick, like his prince, he carried the controversy to the German court. The emperor decided that the Bishop of Prague was a prince of the imperial realm, and consequently was in

duty bound to render allegiance to the emperors and not to the princes of Bohemia. Thus the Emperor Frederick tried to divide the kingdom of Bohemia into two realms, one spiritual and the other secular.

Prince Frederick now tried to win the favor of the emperor by joining him in a crusade to the Holy Land; but he died before the preparations were completed. He was succeeded by Conrad Otto, of Znojem, who, up to this time, had ruled in Moravia. The emperor also died shortly after, while on the crusade, and his son Henry was elected to succeed him. He is known in history as Henry VI.

At the death of Frederick, Bohemia was plunged into the most fearful anarchy. Several princes of the Premysl family tried to win the throne, and in the struggle did not scruple to resort to the most unlawful and ignoble measures. At length the nobility elected Václav, the son of Sobeslav; and Premysl, the brother of Frederick, being the rival claimant, immediately went to Henry, the German emperor, promising him 6,000 pounds of silver if he would grant him the fief of Bohemia. Henry, following the example of his father, gladly accepted the offer, and Premysl, otherwise called Ottokar, became the ruler of Bohemia, Václav being compelled to give up the throne.

Ottokar being unable to raise so large a sum of money, the Bishop Bretislav was sent to the German court as security until the debt should be paid. Henry, however, soon became tired of Premysl Ottokar, and as he had the right to place him upon the throne, so now he claimed the right to depose him. Bretislav, the wily prelate, had succeeded in winning the favor of the emperor, and so was declared the ruler of Bohe-

mia. Bishop Bretislav, with a large army of German troops, now came to Bohemia to secure the throne, meeting the rightful ruler at Zdik. The Bohemian lords, who shortly before had sworn that they would lay down their lives for their prince, now treacherously forsook him, going over to the side of the usurper, and Premysl was obliged to flee, leaving the ambitious prelate master of the field. Bretislav also conquered Moravia, taking Vladislav, the brother of Premysl, prisoner.

As soon as he was well established upon the throne, the emperor sent him against the Margrave of Meissen, who was in rebellion against him. The prelate-prince devastated the country of Meissen so fearfully, that he himself was struck with shame and agreed to do a public penance.

Bishop Bretislav ruled in Bohemia only four years. Being taken ill, the lords at once proceeded to elect his successor. Being afraid of Premysl on account of their treachery to him, they set Vladislav at liberty, and elected him their prince. Premysl hearing of this, and thinking that, as the older brother, he had better claims to the crown, gathered his friends about him and hastened to Bohemia, for the second time to try to win the coveted prize. But Vladislav, with a magnanimity rarely seen among princes, and especially the princes of those days, decided that he would save his country from the horrors of another civil war. Having a far larger army at his command than Premysl, Vladislav, nevertheless, resigned the government into his brother's hands, exacting from him a solemn promise that he would do all in his power to promote the peace and prosperity of his subjects.

PREMYSL OTTOKAR I.

Premysl, surnamed by the Germans Ottokar, was endowed by nature with the qualities that make a good ruler. He was not only a good general, but also a statesman, and it was both these qualities that enabled him to restore his country to her former independence.

When Premysl Ottokar became the ruler of Bohemia, the States constituting the German Empire were torn by internal dissensions, and as formerly the emperors had profited by the domestic troubles in Bohemia, so now Premysl Ottokar determined to profit by similar troubles in Germany.

After the death of Henry VI, the German lords and princes were divided into two hostile parties. One party wanted to choose as emperor Philip of Hohenstaufen, the brother of Henry VI, since his son Frederick was still too young to rule; the other party wanted Otto, the Duke of Brunswick. Premysl, being one of the electors, favored Philip, and that prince succeeded in securing the election. As a reward for this service, Philip declared Premysl the King of Bohemia, and also made that title forever hereditary in the rulers of that country. Both Premysl Ottokar and Philip were crowned the same day at Mayence.

But Philip had an inveterate enemy in the Pope, Innocent III, who favored Otto of Brunswick, since the latter had promised, if elected, to do great things in establishing the power of the Church in his dominions. By favoring Philip, Premysl incurred the enmity of Innocent III, which was a great misfortune, since he needed the help of that prelate in several matters. In violation of the customs of those days, the Bohemians

had chosen their own bishop, and they desired the Pope's confirmation of this act; then Premysl wanted a divorce from his wife Adleta, and permission to marry another lady. After much negotiation, the Pope consented to grant these favors, but only on condition that Premysl withdraw his allegiance from Philip and transfer it to Otto.

For this act of obedience, the Pope showered his favors upon Premysl Ottokar. He confirmed all the old rights and privileges of Bohemia, so that they never again could be touched by the German emperors; at the same time the country was ranked among the other kingdoms of Christendom (1204). He acknowledged the independence of the country; declared her rulers to be kings equal in dignity to any princes of Germany. In those days, such declarations from the head of the Church were of inestimable value, since it was generally conceded that the Pope alone had the right to grant royal titles. In accordance with this theory, the first coronation of Premysl was declared null and void, and he was crowned a second time by the Pope's legate, Cardinal Guido.

Another favor granted to Premysl, which filled the whole land with rejoicing, was the canonization of St. Prokop, the founder of the Sazava monastery.

Premysl Ottokar had espoused the cause of Otto against his own judgment, and the Pope also found that his confidence in that ruler had been misplaced. No sooner was Otto well established upon the imperial throne than he forgot all his promises to Pope Innocent, and, indeed, came out in open hostility against him. Refusing to be admonished, he was excommunicated, and Frederick of Hohenstaufen was declared his suc-

cessor. This turn of affairs proved exceedingly fortunate for Premysl Ottokar. His sympathies being with Frederick, he espoused his cause with sincere joy, and it was through his assistance that Frederick was able to gain possession of the imperial throne. What high value Frederick placed upon the services of Premysl may be judged from the concessions he made to him : Bohemia should forever be a kingdom ; the emperor should never impose any duties upon the rulers of that country, except the three hundred horsemen to accompany them to Rome, or, in default of this, three hundred pounds of silver ; the investitures of the Bishops of Bohemia should be given by the Kings of Bohemia, and not, as had hitherto been done, by the emperor. In addition to this, several strongholds on the borders of the country were ceded to Bohemia.

Thus Premysl, by knowing how to take advantage of favorable circumstances, secured dignity and independence for his country. When he ascended the throne, the country was on the verge of ruin, and there is no doubt that if such a state of affairs had continued longer, Bohemia as Bohemia would have been blotted out of existence, being torn up into petty principalities, and divided among the various German princes.

Premysl Ottokar, fearing that what had been gained in his reign might be lost in the next, called a Diet, and had it pass a law in regard to the succession. The Diet, following the custom in vogue among other nations, passed the law of primogeniture, according to which Václav, the older son of Premysl Ottokar, was declared the successor. To give greater weight to this decision, Václav was crowned and made joint ruler

with his father. The younger son was given the government of Moravia.

Before the close of Premysl's reign, trouble arose between him and the emperor. Frederick had promised to give his oldest son Henry in marriage to Premysl's daughter Agnes, who, for this reason, was brought up at the court of Leopold, the Duke of Austria, since, as the prospective empress, it was necessary that she should become accustomed to German manners and customs. When Agnes was seventeen years of age, Premysl expected that now the promise would be fulfilled; so what was his amazement when his daughter was sent back to him in disgrace. Leopold had persuaded the emperor to give Henry to his own daughter, Margaret. Premysl resented this slight by a declaration of war, which, aside from satisfying his offended dignity, led to no practical results.

Agnes was so deeply hurt that she abjured wedlock, choosing rather to spend her days within cloister walls. She joined the order of the Sisters of Clara; but, being a highly gifted woman, and having been educated with a view to public life, she could not rest content with spending all her time in devotional exercises. Although out of the world, she kept herself informed of its doings. Being greatly beloved by her brother Václav, she became his best friend and counselor. She was also held in high regard by the Pope, who often consulted her in matters of Church and State relating to Bohemia. Agnes had great influence in regard to the organization of benevolent institutions in Prague. She organized the order of St. Clara in Prague, which had a hospital connected with

its convent. She was abbess of this convent for forty-eight years. However pious her life, and full of good works, she never forgot the slight put upon her by Henry, and, through her influence upon King Václav, she made that prince feel both her power and her enmity.

KING VÁCLAV I.

Premysl Ottokar died in 1230, and his son Václav, already crowned during the life of his father, ascended the throne without any opposition. This ruler, twenty-five years of age at the time he assumed the government, was a brave and spirited young man, energetic in his actions, but estranged from his people by his German education. Indeed, Václav loved everything that was foreign, and during his reign foreign manners and customs were introduced into the country as never before. This tendency to push Slavic customs into the background was already marked at his coronation. In the old days, the chosen prince was led to the simple stone seat, which was a sort of throne, and installed into his office in a very simple manner. He was given the leathern hand-bag and wooden shoes brought to Vyšehrad by the first Premysl, to remind him that princes come from the people, and hence derive their authority from them. But in the coronation of Václav, he was taken in great pomp to the cathedral, where, with magnificent ceremonial, he was crowned by the archbishop, thus indicating that his authority was derived from the Church, and not from the people.

The continual contact with the German nations, during the reigns of both Premysl and Václav, made the Bohemian people acquainted with the intellectual

progress of Western Europe; but, at the same time, it was the means of introducing into the country many evil customs hitherto unknown. The higher classes became more and more luxurious in their mode of life, and in the same proportion as the lords waxed fat, the peasants upon their estates waxed lean, until servitude as grievous as slavery gradually became introduced into the country.

Václav set the example of luxurious living, by inviting into the country Ojir, of Friedberg, to organize a court equal in magnificence to any in Europe. For this service he received the fortress Bilin, with all the adjacent estates. In connection with the magnificent court came also the tournament, which was introduced into the country during this reign. The knights vied with each other in their rich coats of mail, their helmets and shields overlaid with gold and precious stones, satin cloaks embroidered with silver and gold, and costly trappings for their steeds.

King Václav was also an admirer of the fine arts, especially of poetry and music. Wandering singers and troubadours were always sure of a warm welcome at his court. A fragment of a love-song, said to have been composed by him, is still extant. Although Václav was very fond of music, there was one kind of music that he could not endure, and that was the ringing of bells. Whenever he was to pass through a town or village, couriers were sent ahead to warn the people not to offend his majesty's sensibilities by ringing their bells.

At this time much stress began to be laid upon birth. For a man to be counted "good," it was necessary that he could refer to his noble lineage at least

from "four corners;" that is, both his parents and grandparents had to be of noble blood.

During the reigns of Premysl and Václav, the lords built many fortresses, imitating in this the nobles of other countries.

These fortresses, built by the different lords, helped to establish the custom of taking surnames. Up to this time no family names had been used. Sometimes a son, wishing to have some way of being known from other men of the same name, took the name of his father; but this name was not permanent. Thus, supposing his name was John and that of his father Herman, he would be called John Hermanov, which meant Herman's John. But Hermanov did not remain the distinguishing name of his family; for his son, in turn, might assume his father's Christian name. Permanent family names were at first assumed by the nobles from some device upon their standards, and from their castles or fortresses. Thus Sir Wok, whose device was a rose, built a fortress (1241-1246), and named it Rosenberg; after that the men of the family were known as the Lords of Rosenberg. The same may be said of the origin of Sternberg, Lichtenberg, Wartenberg, and others.

There was a peculiar custom in those days of giving the same name to several sons of the same family. Thus, a father of one of the old families, called Vitek, had five sons, of whom one was called Frederick, and all the rest Viteks; consequently Vitek was adopted as the surname, in the Bohemian language the plural being Vitkovci.

The common people soon imitated the higher classes, but they generally adopted as surnames the

names of their occupations, or some event in their lives determined the question.

THE INVASION OF THE TARTARS.

The most important event in the reign of Václav was the invasion of the Tartars. Of all the barbaric hordes that swept like a flood upon Europe from the interior of Asia, that of the Tartars was the most terrible. The Tartars had their home in Northern Asia, in the vicinity of Lake Baikal. John Plan-Karpin, a brave monk, penetrated into the heart of their country, and made Europe acquainted with some of their customs and institutions. According to his account, the chief of the Tartars was Genghis Khan, who was not only the commander of their armies, but their prince and lawgiver. He possessed unlimited power over the lives and property of his subjects, but his office was not hereditary. He was elected by his lords, and had he attempted to gain his throne in some other way, his life would have been forfeit, and he would have been put to death without mercy. He was regarded as the son of God, the lord of the whole universe, whose duty it was to bring all nations into subjection. The army of the Tartars was subjected to the severest discipline, the smallest fault being punished by the execution of the whole division of ten, to which the offending soldier belonged. But the most dreadful crimes committed against the enemy were not only left unpunished, but were praised and rewarded. From this it may be judged what an enemy Europe had to cope with. The Tartars first devastated and plundered a large part of Asia, and then turned against Russia. Many fugi-

tives, glad that they escaped with their lives, brought to Europe the news of the fearful ravagings of those savage Mongolians.

The great powers at this time were the Pope and the emperor, and it was their duty to prepare Europe against the threatening invasion. The Pope, indeed, declared a Crusade, but took no active measures to organize and send the army against the enemy; and the emperor did not seem to realize the extent of the danger, and so did nothing to meet it. The luxury-loving, sentimental, and dissipated King of Bohemia, for once seemed to wake up to a realization of the magnitude of the danger threatening, not only his own dominions, but all Europe. The tournaments, the feasts, the hunting expeditions were all forgotten, and Václav bent every energy to put his country in a state of defense. The country was overrun by couriers bearing fiery appeals to all the lords to urge them to make every possible preparation to meet the enemy. Václav saw that new fortresses were built, and old ones repaired, and all was done with such haste that even priests and monks were impressed into service to help in digging trenches and building fortifications. In a short time the country was well fortified, and Václav, at the head of 46,000 men, 6,000 of whom were German allies, went to meet the enemy.

It has been estimated that the army of the Tartars numbered half a million men, although some historians place it at a much higher figure. It was divided into three parts; the first division was to attack northern Germany, the second Bohemia, and the third Hungary. Hungary was the first victim of the blood-thirsty savages; then the lot fell upon Moravia. The

war was not carried on merely with the armies, but the people, men, women and children, were murdered without mercy, after enduring frightful cruelties. Some of the people, indeed, saved their lives by escaping to the forests, where they perished from sickness and starvation.

The army destined to invade Bohemia first fought a battle at Yobrem, in Poland. The Bohemian army was hastening to the assistance of the Poles, but did not reach them in time. King Václav wrote to Prague as follows: "When the Tartars were in Poland, we were so near that we could have reached the army of Duke Henry in a day; but he, alas! asking neither our help nor advice, alone risked a battle and woefully perished. Hearing this, we marched on, hoping with God's help to avenge his death; but the Tartars, discovering our intent, took to flight, and in one day, from morning till night, marched a distance of forty-four miles."

Some days after this, the Bohemians and Moravians joined their forces, and, aided by the army of Frederick of Austria, they waited for the enemy at Olmutz.

A severe battle was fought, in which the Tartars were defeated. They fell back to Hungary to join the rest of their forces, to be better prepared for another battle. But the second battle was never fought. Some time after the news reached the Tartar horde of the death of their chief, the great Khan of Tartary, and the commander of the army, wishing to take part in the election of a new ruler, hastened home, and the invasion was never renewed.

Although Václav was quite successful in war and

in his relations with other nations, his domestic affairs were by no means happy. He had set all his hopes upon his oldest son Vladislav. At an early age he had had him betrothed to Kedruth, the daughter of the Duke of Austria, hoping by this marriage to bring about the union of Austria and Bohemia. But the premature death of the young man brought to naught all these hopes. The next heir to the throne was his second son, Premysl Ottokar; but Václav hated him, and for this reason had devoted him to holy orders. But when he saw that the people looked to Premysl as their future king, he gave him the government of Moravia; but at the same time he was on the lookout for some pretext to send him out of the country.

As Premysl Ottokar was a very promising young man, possessed of many qualities that would enable him to be a better ruler than his father, the lords determined to secure to him the succession, even against the wishes of Václav. A conspiracy was formed, and in 1248, while the king was gone to one of his fortresses in the country, the lords met in Prague, formally deposed him, and elected his son in his place. Civil war was the result. The events that followed are summed up by the historian of those times, as follows: "King Václav was driven from the throne, Queen Kunhut died of grief, schools in Prague were closed, a large part of the city was burned to the ground, and the guards of the churches left their posts and fled."

Premysl's army was much larger than his father's; consequently he could easily have defeated him had he been willing to join battle with his forces; but this he would by no means do. Finally, through superior

military skill, he succeeded in wedging in Václav's army so that there was no hope left but defeat or starvation. A treaty of peace was made. Ottokar was declared the rightful ruler, Václav being assigned several fortresses. The Pope, however, declared this treaty null and void, since it had been made under compulsion. It was finally decided that the two kings should rule conjointly. This, however, did not satisfy Václav, and at the earliest opportunity he broke his oath, and attacked Ottokar so that he fled for his life. The king then took possession of Prague, and gave a grand church festival to celebrate the victory. To crown all, messengers were sent to the fugitive son, asking him and his friends to return to the city, as the king was ready to pronounce a general amnesty. They were received with great honor. The king embraced, not only his son, but also the other lords that had been in rebellion against him, giving them the kiss of peace.

This magnanimity on the part of King Václav proved to be but the impulse of the moment. Shortly after, he had some of the lords arrested and cast into prison. One of them was beheaded, and another broken upon the wheel. Premysl Ottokar was also imprisoned, but only for a short time. He was finally reinstated in his possessions of Moravia, where he remained till his father's death in 1253.

STATE INSTITUTIONS.

Till about the middle of the thirteenth century the State policy, judicial methods, manners and customs in public and private life, were strictly Slavonic.

The country was divided into districts called zu-

pas. Each zupa consisted of a fortified town or inclosure, with its citadel, and the adjacent fields belonging to the inhabitants. The chief officer of the citadel was the castellan, or zupan; in the town, the chief officer was the justice or squire, who, together with the sheriff, constituted the judiciary. In criminal cases, the whole town was held responsible, it being the duty of all the male inhabitants to go in pursuit of the criminal and bring him to justice; in default of which they were subject to a heavy fine. Cities with corporate towns were unknown until after the age of Ottokar II. The fortress connected with the town was built upon a plain, with easy access to water, since, in times of danger, it was the place of refuge for the inhabitants, together with their cattle. It is estimated that there were about forty such fortified towns in Bohemia. In addition to these, there were fortresses built by the wealthy land-owners or noblemen, for the protection of their families and dependents. These were usually built upon precipitous heights, where a small body of men could defend themselves against a superior force. There were also villages built upon the estates of the noblemen.

The people very early began to be divided into classes. Those that owned land were a sort of aristocracy, and were called zemans. A part of these zemans were the nobility; but it is not possible to state exactly what was the difference between a common zeman and a nobleman. In general, it may be said that those zemans that were able to fit out a small body of men to aid their prince in time of war, constituted the nobility; while those that were obliged to go as soldiers themselves were the plebeians. Both

the wealthier and poorer zemans had tenants upon their lands, called kmets, and the kmets, with their families, constituted the bulk of the population. They were sometimes called sedlacy, this name being applied to small land-owners in Bohemia at the present time. The kmets, as tenants, paid rent in kind, and did menial service for their lords; but as they were not attached to the soil, they can not properly be called serfs. In theory, the noblemen, zemans, kmets, tradesmen, and other people, were equal before the law; but, as might be supposed, the powerful soon learned to oppress the weak, and gradually the idea grew that the life of a man was valuable according as he had means and influential friends. There was an ancient law that provided that if a nobleman killed a peasant, he paid a greater fine than if the peasant killed the nobleman; but contact with Teutonic neighbors soon taught the Slavs to reverse this method.

During the continual struggles for the throne, the country being in a state of anarchy, the common people lost much of their original liberty. Sometimes the poor peasant, being plundered by each of the contending parties in turn, only saved himself from starvation by accepting land from some lord upon very severe conditions. On account of excessive taxation, the smaller zemans often sold their lands to the wealthier land-owners, and thus there was a constant tendency towards greater and greater inequality.

At first titles of nobility were not hereditary, being dependent upon the wealth and official position of the person; these being lost, he was again a plebeian. And thus it often happened that members of the same family belonged to different social classes. Dur-

ing the Crusades, many rights and privileges were granted to the knights and noblemen to induce them to engage in the enterprise.

In cases of inheritance, the property was divided equally among the children; but if a daughter had received her dowry at marriage, she had no further claim upon the estate of her father. In the division of property, the oldest son, called the "elder," divided the property into equal shares, and the youngest son or daughter, as the case might be, had the first choice; then came the next youngest, and so on, the "elder" taking the last share. It is evident that it was to his interest to make as equitable a division as possible.

Questions of state were decided at the General Assembly. This was made up of the clergy, nobility, and the small land-owners, or zemans. The people who did not own land did not possess political rights, hence could not take part in the Assembly. As representation was unknown, it sometimes happened that the Assembly was made up of several thousand men, and consequently had to be held in the open air. The administration of the law was placed into the hands of twelve kmets. Their acts are referred to even as late as the fifteenth century.

CHAPTER III.

FROM PREMYSL OTTOKAR II TO THE REIGN OF CHARLES IV.

PREMYSL OTTOKAR II.

PREMYSL OTTOKAR was one of the greatest princes that ever ruled in Bohemia; and, in his day, he may be regarded as the greatest prince in Europe; his country, if not the largest, being the wealthiest and most renowned in military glory. The kingdom of Bohemia under Ottokar included Moravia, Carinthia, Lusatia, Lower and Upper Austria, the dominions extending from the Riesengebirge on the north, to the Adriatic Sea on the south. The protection of Ottokar was sought by the Dukes of Poland, Silesia, and by several Italian States.

The political power of Ottokar may be ascribed to a happy combination of circumstances and events rather than to his own character and achievements. He gained Austria, even before the death of his father, by being elected to the government by the lords of that country. To strengthen his hold in the newly-acquired territory, he did not hesitate to marry Margaret, the widow of the Emperor Henry, a woman twenty-three years his senior. His own strength was also due to the weakness of his natural rivals, the various princes of Germany. Yet Ottokar was an excellent ruler, doing much to develop the resources of his country. He enacted some good laws, and wrought quite a reform in the administration of jus-

tice. He gave a great impetus to trade by establishing a uniform system of weights and measures. Václav had squandered most of the crown estates by giving them away to his favorites; and, as these had been gained by fraud, Ottokar did not scruple to restore them to the crown by compulsion. This was done in a very summary manner. The lords were invited to the palace in Prague, and, without any warning, seized and cast into prison, and there kept till they were willing to give up the estates in question. In this way Ottokar gained much wealth, but also the deadly enmity of these lords; and, in time, their vengeance. Besides depriving his nobles of the unlawfully-gained estates, Ottokar humbled them by curtailing many of the rights and privileges granted them by his father. Indeed, the reign of Václav was the golden age of the Bohemian nobility; they had become rich and strong, and consequently very unruly. As an offset to this power, Ottokar established another privileged class; these were corporate cities, the inhabitants of which, enjoying many privileges, were very loyal to their king. Nor was this all; they were also a source of revenue. In the establishment of corporate cities, the king gained a great deal; but, at the same time, a grievous wrong was done to his own subjects. The inhabitants of these cities were mostly German immigrants, the introduction of whom into the country never failed to bring trouble. The two nationalities might have been mutually helpful, but history proves that they never were. The genius of intellectual development for the two races was different, and each was better off when left to grow according to the spiritual laws of its own nation. The intro-

duction of so many foreigners into the country was in itself a great evil, but the special privileges granted to them were even worse. The new towns were given the exclusive right to all trade and manufactures within a distance of three miles from their boundaries. This brought thousands of small tradesmen to ruin. Forbidden to work at their trade in their native villages, and having no other means of sustenance, they were compelled to become thieves or beggars. Besides this, it was an intolerable hardship to the people of the villages to be obliged to go to the German town for every little thing that they needed in the household. Most historians praise Ottokar because he did not resort to any unjust and illegal method of taxation; but the establishment of corporate towns, with special privileges, was a far greater evil than any illegal taxation; the latter would have occasionally been a heavy burden, while the former proved a permanent evil. Indeed, the right of exclusive trade was afterwards extended to the estates of the nobility and the clergy.

Among the old cities that were granted corporate rights were Prague, Kuttenberg, Pilsen, Litomeritz, Hradetz, Budweis, Rolin, Melnik, Domazlitz, and some others. These were known afterwards as royal cities.

Aside from this great wrong done to the native tradesmen, Ottokar tried to be just to his subjects, and to protect the lower classes against the oppression of the higher. For this reason he was quite popular with the common people, but secretly hated by the aristocracy.

PREMYSL OTTOKAR'S MILITARY CAREER.

Premysl Ottokar was a man of war, and his numerous victories caused his fame to be spread all over Europe.

The first war that he engaged in was a crusade against the Prussians upon the Baltic. At this early period in history, the people inhabiting the countries that now constitute Northern Germany belonged to the Slavonic race. They were still heathen, notwithstanding the repeated efforts of the Germans to present the gospel to them at the point of the sword. The Slavonic races were open to the teachings of Christianity when presented to them in the right spirit, which is shown in the cases of Moravia, Bohemia, and Russia, all of which received the new religion from choice, and not from compulsion. It is not pleasant to reflect that Premysl Ottokar, a prince of their own blood, should join their inveterate enemies to invade their country, offering them the new faith, while, at the same time, they secretly hoped it would not be accepted; in which case they would have a plausible pretext to murder them and obtain possession of their wealth.

This crusade was undertaken by the German branch of the Knights of Jerusalem, and the Pope had requested Premysl Ottokar to send as large an army as possible to their aid. As some of the fortresses of the Prussians were built in deep forests, surrounded by rivers and marches that made them almost inaccessible, the time chosen for the campaign was winter, when the ground was frozen. With an army of 60,000 men, Ottokar invaded the country.

Before attacking the enemy, they entered the sacred groves, cut down the ancient oaks, and burned the images, thus showing the people the helplessness of the gods in whom they had placed so much faith. Having lost faith in their gods, the Prussians were struck with a panic and easily defeated; and, there being no other alternative, they consented to be baptized.

To conciliate the conquered, and make the new religion appear more attractive to them, the commanders decided to stand as sponsors to the chief Prussians. King Ottokar stood sponsor to the first nobleman, giving him his own name, and, what was of more value, many rich gifts; Otto, the Margrave of Brandenburg, and other German princes, followed the royal example. The common people, seeing their leaders treated with so much consideration, hastened from all directions, willingly receiving baptism.

In commemoration of the success of the enterprise, Ottokar founded a new city, which was named Königsberg, after which he returned to his own country.

This campaign against the Prussians greatly enhanced the glory and military renown of Ottokar. Upon the death of the Emperor of Germany, he was offered the imperial crown; but fearing that, beyond the empty title, he would have more trouble than gain, he declined the honor. The wretched condition of the German Empire may be inferred from the fact, that no home prince could be found to accept the imperial crown; and the electors were obliged to go to a foreign land to seek for a suitable candidate. Richard of Cornwall, brother of the English king, was chosen to be emperor, the Bohemian king at once forming a treaty of alliance and friendship with him.

Philip, the Archbishop of Salzburg, who was Ottokar's cousin, had trouble with his chapter, upon which he was deposed, and another archbishop appointed in his place. As the deposed archbishop refused to give up his office, war broke out, and Ottokar went to the assistance of his cousin. He was defeated, and compelled to leave the country in disgrace, after giving up several towns and fortresses to the Bavarians.

Ottokar, however, soon retrieved his military honor by a series of brilliant victories over the Hungarians. War with Hungary. Bela, the King of Hungary, declared war against Ulric and Philip, the Dukes of Carinthia, who appealed for aid to Ottokar. At the same time the people of Styria rose in rebellion against the Hungarians, and turned for help to Ottokar, promising to make him their ruler if once free from the Magyar yoke. Ottokar granted the request, sent an army into Styria, which drove out the Hungarians, and established a Bohemian nobleman in the government. This proved the beginning of a great war between Hungary and Bohemia. The rulers of both countries made vast preparations for the coming contest. King Bela impressed into his service all the able-bodied men of his dominions, besides making alliances of friendship with the neighboring States. He soon had an army of 140,000, composed of Magyars, Croats, Bosnians, Serbs, Bulgarians, Italians, Greeks, and even a regiment of Tartar mercenaries.

Ottokar collected his troops from Bohemia, Moravia, and Austria, several German princes also sending some troops. His army numbered 100,000 men, among them a regiment of 7,000 cavalry, composed entirely

of Bohemians, and clad in steel armor from head to foot.

In the spring of 1260 the two great armies met upon the opposite banks of the Danube, where they remained for several days facing each other, neither daring to run the risk of crossing the river. At length, Ottokar sent messengers to the Hungarian camp, asking King Bela, either to let the Bohemian army cross the river, or to cross it themselves, he pledging his honor that they should not be molested until they were safely over, when both armies could fight with the same advantage. King Bela decided to cross, whereupon Ottokar withdrew with his army to give the enemy abundance of room for landing. While thus falling back, his regiments became separated from each other, and the Hungarians, perceiving this, thought it a favorable moment to make an attack and gain an easy victory. Thus Stephen, the son of Bela, unmindful that the truce had not yet expired, most treacherously fell upon the main division of the Bohemian army, which, for a moment was thrown into confusion. But the alarm being sounded, the regiments were soon in the place of danger, ready to meet the foe. Just as they were about to make the attack, the sun came out, the fog that had before obscured their vision vanished, and the whole army saw before them the iron seven thousand waving the banner of St. Václav. This was a good omen: St. Václav would fight for them. A wild shout burst from the soldiers, and, as if by inspiration, the vast army united in singing the old Slavonic hymn, "*Hospodine pomiluj ny*"—(Lord, have mercy upon us). Then they rushed to battle with so much enthusiasm and impetuosity that the enemy soon began to fall

back, and finally ran to the river in a headlong flight. Eighteen thousand men of the Hungarian army remained upon the field of battle, while fourteen thousand more perished in the waves of the Danube.

King Bela, humbled in spirit, sued for peace. It was made upon conditions that Styria should remain under the government of Bohemia, and the Hungarian king should give his son Bela in marriage to Kunigunda, the daughter of the Viscount of Brandenburg, and niece of Ottokar. This victory over the Hungarians won much renown for both King Ottokar and the Bohemians. On account of the 7,000 cavalry clad in steel armor, the Tartars called Ottokar the Iron King; but throughout Europe he was called the Golden King, on account of his wealth and the magnificence of his court.

The wedding of the son of the Hungarian king and the niece of Ottokar was held three years later, on the very grounds where the great battle was fought; and, as it well illustrates the wealth of the Bohemian king and the splendor of his court, a short description will here be given.

The preparations for the wedding were on so grand a scale that many princes, doubting the reports, sent emissaries to Vienna to spy out the real facts. The place selected for the wedding-feast was near the village of Kressenbrunn, about ten miles from Vienna. Tents were put up, having all the accommodations of permanent dwellings. A bridge wide enough for ten riders to go abreast was built across the Danube. Two large palace-like tents were set up, in which each king, surrounded by hundreds of retainers, knights, and noblemen, tried to outvie the other in the magnificence

The Wedding
of Kuni-
gunda and
Bela.

of display, so that this fête may well be compared with the Field of the Cloth of Gold of the time of Henry VIII of England. Although several hundred thousand guests were present, the provisions prepared for the occasion were on so generous a scale, that, after all had eaten and drunk to their heart's content, three times as much as had been used still remained.

The bride was attired in a purple robe embroidered in Arabic gold; and it was said, in those days, that the precious stones ornamenting her head-dress were more costly than the crown of the King of England. It is needless to add that the guests for days were regaled with the richest viands and the choicest wines, and, seeing one display after another of the wealth of Bohemia, were dazzled, and returned home to their respective countries with their minds full of the glory of the King of Bohemia.

All the glory that Ottokar enjoyed grew dim at the thought that at his death the dynasty of the Premysls must cease; for his wife Margaret, now fifty-five years of age, had borne him no children. It seems that he had lived in peace with her; but as far as conjugal fidelity is concerned, his character was not above reproach. The object of his illicit love was Agnes, one of Margaret's maids of honor, by whom he had three children—a son and two daughters. As Agnes was of a noble family, Ottokar tried to obtain a dispensation from the Pope, whereby the children could enjoy all the privileges of legitimacy. The Pope granted the request, but added a proviso that destroyed the very thing that Ottokar had hoped to gain—no illegitimate child was ever to inherit the crown of Bohemia. Failing in this, Ottokar's last re-

Ottokar's Divorce.

sort was a divorce. This was readily obtained, since Margaret herself was not only willing but anxious to withdraw from a court where she was regarded as an obstacle to the king's happiness. Having secured his liberty, Ottokar married Kunigunda, the daughter of the Russian prince, Rostislav Michalovic. Some time after, the newly-married couple were crowned with great splendor in St. Vitus Cathedral in Prague. From this time on, Ottokar signed himself King of Bohemia; for although he had been called king by his subjects and by the foreign princes, he himself never assumed the title till after his coronation. His hopes for an heir were realized in this marriage. Kunigunda bore him two children—a son and a daughter.

One of the greatest evils that the Bohemian rulers had to contend with was the continual interference in their affairs by the German emperors. But Ottokar's
Fall. during the reign of Ottokar II, the empire had become so demoralized that it seemed on the verge of ruin, and Ottokar, taking advantage of this, was able to raise his country to such power and greatness as had never before been done by any other ruler. This interval of freedom, however, was not lasting, and Premysl Ottokar had cause to regret that he had declined the imperial crown when it had been offered him. As long as Richard of Cornwall occupied the imperial throne, Bohemia did not have much to fear from Germany; but when he died, in 1272, affairs immediately assumed a threatening aspect. The German princes now cast their looks about to find a man for an emperor, who should help them to humble the pride of the Bohemian prince, and who, at the same time, should not stand in the way of their own ag-

grandizement. They found such a prince in Rudolph, the Count of Hapsburg, who, having some small possessions in Switzerland and Suabia, was too weak to assume any great authority over his constituents, and, moreover, agreed to wrest from the kingdom of Bohemia its recently acquired territories—Austria, Styria, and Carinthia. While this election was going on, Ottokar was out of the country engaged in another war with the Hungarians; but his office of elector was usurped by Louis of Bavaria, his most inveterate enemy. As soon as he learned of the election of Rudolph, he made peace with the enemy, and hastened home, and at once entered his protest against the election as being unlawful, since he, one of the rightful electors, was not present. For some time he was sustained in this by the Pope; but Rudolph, being a man of much diplomacy, soon succeeded in winning that prelate to his side. The Bohemian king was cited to appear before the newly-elected emperor to explain why he had not already come to swear his allegiance. Premysl Ottokar refusing to obey the summons, Rudolph declared his possessions as falling to the empire, and himself as being the sovereign lord of Bohemia and Moravia.

Premysl Ottokar now found himself surrounded by the greatest difficulties. His nobles, instead of standing by him in the hour of need, basely deserted him, rejoicing that now had come the time when they could satisfy their own private desire for revenge. They had never forgiven him for depriving them of the illegally-obtained crown lands. Then, too, Premysl's State policy constantly aimed at centralization of power, which was directly opposed to the inter-

ests of the upper classes. Then it was said that the lords hated him because he showed much favor to the Jews and the Germans.

Rudolph made very extensive preparations for war, being sustained by the princes of the empire, who willingly sent large forces to his aid. Besides this, he secured the alliance of the King of Hungary, who was glad of the opportunity to help to humble the pride of his old enemy. The Hungarian army was to invade Moravia and Austria, while the imperial army marched into Bohemia.

The Bohemian king, surrounded by thankless and disloyal lords, could raise but a small army as compared with that of the emperor; yet he did not lose heart, but did the very best he could with the means at his command. The Hungarians, according to agreement, invaded Moravia, marching with little opposition as far as Vienna. Here they were met by Rudolph's army, who, instead of going first to Bohemia, had also marched directly to Vienna. While Premysl Ottokar was marching in pursuit of the imperial army, a conspiracy broke out among some of the first lords of the kingdom, who at once commenced to devastate the estates and cities of the king. This unexpected blow decided the fate of the unfortunate king. By this time his army was reduced to but 20,000, while that of Rudolph was five times as large. Seeing that a battle at such fearful odds would be but useless bloodshed, Ottokar agreed to make peace, the terms of which were very hard indeed. Premysl was obliged to give up all his possessions except Bohemia and Moravia, which he received as fiefs from the emperor. In addition to this, it was agreed that Václav, the only

son of Ottokar, should marry the daughter of Rudolph, and Hartman, the son of the latter, the daughter of the Bohemian ruler. By this double marriage, Rudolph hoped that he might secure Bohemia to his own house, in case the line of the Premysls should die out. It must be added that the betrothed parties were mere children, consequently the marriage was not to take place till many years after. As hard as were the above terms for the Bohemian king, there was one clause in the treaty that was even more grievous. The emperor, desiring to take the rebellious lords of Bohemia under his protection, declared them his own vassals, who were answerable for their actions only to him, and not to the King of Bohemia. This was virtually destroying the independence of the country, making it a mere province of the emperor's other possessions. After much negotiation, which, however, led to no results, the emperor refusing to give up his claims to the loyalty of the lords of Bohemia, Ottokar was driven to desperation, and so began to prepare for another war.

In this war the princes of the realm did not respond so heartily to the call of their emperor to furnish troops; nevertheless, he was able to raise a much larger army than Ottokar, who had only the princes of Silesia to aid him. A decisive battle was fought upon the very grounds where Premysl Ottokar had won such a brilliant victory over the Hungarians in the earlier part of his reign. But in those days the army of the king fought as one man; while now, there was division—treachery in the camp. During the action, while the tide seemed to be turning in favor of the Bohemians, one of the chief lords cried that all was lost, and that who could, should save his life. This caused a

panic; Premysl Ottokar, seeing that all was lost, plunged, with some of his faithful followers, into the thickest battle, and fell pierced by many swords. The defeat of the Bohemians was complete. Of the 30,000 men engaged in the battle, 12,000 were left upon the field (1278). Some personal enemies of the fallen king, finding his body, tore off the clothing, and brutally mutilated it. When Rudolph afterwards saw the body, he gazed with consternation upon all that now remained of one who, in life, had been the greatest ruler of his time.

When the news of the fall of Ottokar reached Bohemia, the common people were filled with sorrow. Premysl Ottokar had been a good and just ruler, and had often taken up the cause of the poor against the wealthy classes that oppressed them; and this very virtue in him led, ultimately, to his ruin.

The death of the king brought the country into a state of anarchy. The selfish lords, caring nothing for the people, did nothing to oppose the approach of the enemy, and thus Rudolph marched through Moravia without any let or hindrance, leaving misery and death behind him. Among the distinguished prisoners in his train was the Bohemian queen, with her seven-year-old Václav.

The imperial army marched into Bohemia as far as Kutteneberg. Here they were met by some Bohemian lords with a small force, and negotiations for peace were entered upon. It was agreed that the emperor should hold Moravia for five years, and that Bohemia should be governed by regents until Václav, the son of Ottokar, should be of age. To perpetuate his hold upon the two countries, the agreement entered upon

with Ottokar concerning the double wedding of the royal children was again renewed; and lest something should again happen to prevent carrying out the plan, the marriage ceremony was actually performed. Guta, the daughter of Rudolph, was married to Václav, and Agnes, the sister of Václav, to Rudolph's son, of the same name. As none of the children were more than ten years old, they still remained with their parents, Václav living with his mother in Prague.

Otto of Brandenburg was made regent of Bohemia, and appointed guardian of the young prince.

OTTO OF BRANDENBURG.

After the departure of Rudolph from Bohemia, the greatest disorder and misery prevailed. The regent filled the land with swarms of favorites brought from Brandenburg, whose interest in the country extended no further than their own purses. These favorites held the most lucrative positions; but, not being satisfied with their incomes, they got money from the people by the most cruel extortions.

The native lords added to the state of anarchy that prevailed by forcibly seizing the estates that had been given them by Václav I, but taken away by his son, Premysl Ottokar. Instead of putting down such disturbances, Otto encouraged them, since they gave him the opportunity to interfere and obtain rich rewards from those enjoying his favor. Not satisfied with this, he plundered the churches and monasteries of their wealth, enriching thus his own estates in Germany. Entering into an understanding with some of the native lords, he deprived the queen of her estates, using the income for his own benefit; and finally

went so far as to imprison both her and Václav in a strong fortress, where she was kept under a strong guard, and deprived of all the comforts to which she had been accustomed. A Diet having been called, the nobles tried to obtain the liberty of the queen, but to no purpose; Otto, as guardian and regent, claimed the right to keep them in confinement. The queen finally succeeded in making her escape, whereupon she fled to Moravia; but the young prince was left behind to pine in solitude all alone.

The native lords, seeing that the condition of the country was growing worse and worse, and that the foreign adventurers were becoming rich at the expense of the native lords and citizens, began to hold meetings, and secretly to prepare to cast off the foreign yoke. The facts transpiring, Otto took the young prince and fled with him to Brandenburg. Rudolph, now fearing that Otto had some evil design against his youthful son-in-law, decided to come into the country himself to settle the difficulties. It was decided that Otto should still remain the guardian of the prince, but that the latter should be sent to Prague, the government promising to pay 15,000 pounds silver for his release. To restore the country to peace, all the Germans that had been brought to the country by the regent were now ordered to leave within three days under a penalty of death. The lords who had taken possession of the crown estates were ordered to give them up, and if they had any claims upon them, to seek redress by process of law. By these means peace was again restored; but the evil effects of the state of anarchy were not so easily obliterated.

In the state of anarchy, many of the peasants fled

to the woods to escape with their lives, the fields lay neglected, and a fearful famine was the result. The dead and dying lay everywhere, uncared for and unburied, and pestilence was soon added to the list of horrors that the country was passing through. The winter of 1281-1282 was one of extreme misery. About 600,000 persons perished. The following year the land was blessed with an abundant harvest, and, order and security being restored, the country soon began to recuperate its wonted strength.

THE REGENCY OF ZAVIS OF FALKENSTEIN.

In the year 1283, Prince Václav, then twelve years of age, came back to Prague, to the great joy of all the people, who looked upon him as the one who was to restore the country to its former peace and prosperity. Being still too young to rule, the government was placed into the hands of those nobles who had taken the most active measures for the release of the young prince. At this time, his mother, Kunigunda, returned from Moravia, bringing with her the powerful Lord Zavis, of Falkenstein, to whom she had for some time been secretly married. This nobleman, in a short time, won such an ascendancy over the young prince, that he was chosen chief chancellor, and his favorites were given almost all the other offices of profit and trust. This again brought the country upon the verge of civil war, and Rudolph again came to the country to restore peace. It seems that the trouble was settled in favor of Falkenstein; for soon after, he celebrated his wedding with the queen, and then, as stepfather of Václav, and chancellor, he assumed entire control of the government. On the

whole, it may be said that he ruled well, putting down, with a strong hand, the unruly nobles, as well as the bands of robbers that infested the country. He protected the interests of the crown by compelling some lords to give up the estates they still held; but, at the same time, he did not scruple himself to take possession of vast estates that did not rightfully belong to him. Queen Kunigunda having died, Falkenstein, claiming to be her heir, held cities and fortresses that had formerly belonged to her while Queen of Bohemia, but which she had no legal right to will away to any one outside of the royal family.

Falkenstein's policy not only roused the jealousy of the nobles, but also that of the emperor, who feared that the young Václav would have more regard to his wishes than to those of his father-in-law, and therefore he determined, if possible, to put an end to the government of Falkenstein. To win the favor of Václav, he resigned the government of Moravia as soon as the five years were out for which he was to hold the country. Then he offered to bring to Václav his wife, if he would agree to dismiss Falkenstein; and as the young prince had for some time been very desirous to see her, he was easily persuaded to send away that nobleman. Falkenstein, hearing of the plots against him, resigned his office, and departed to his castle of Furstenberg, where, shortly after, he took another wife, the sister of the King of Hungary.

About a year after this, there were great rejoicings in the Furstenberg castle. A son had been born to Falkenstein, and grand preparations were made for the christening, to which were invited both Václav and many distinguished noblemen.

The Death of
Falkenstein.

The enemies of Falkenstein now saw an opportunity to revenge themselves upon him, which they did in a most infamous manner. They made Václav believe that the friendship of Falkenstein was not sincere; that he had invited him to the christening to get him into his power, so that he could murder him. They, therefore, advised Václav to pretend to accept the invitation, but to ask Falkenstein to come to him to Prague, and that then the whole party would return together to Furstenberg. Falkenstein, not suspecting treachery, came to Prague, and was immediately seized and cast into prison. He then received orders to give up all the estates that had formerly belonged to the crown, and that he had illegally obtained. Refusing to comply with the demand, he was taken to the white tower, and there kept in close confinement.

Falkenstein had numerous friends and relatives among some of the most powerful noblemen of the kingdom. These now took up his cause, securing the aid of the King of Hungary and the Prince of Breslau, and commenced a war with the young king. Václav secured the aid of his father-in-law, who sent an army to Bohemia under the command of his son Rudolph.

The friends of Falkenstein remaining in rebellion, Rudolph gave the young king some bloody counsel. He advised him to have Falkenstein carried from fortress to fortress, calling upon his friends to surrender, and, in case of refusal, to threaten to have the noble prisoner beheaded before their very eyes. The advice was followed, and several fortresses thus fell into the hands of the king; but when they arrived at Frauenberg, near Budweis, where the brother of the prisoner was in command of the garrison, he refused to surren-

der, not believing that Václav would carry out so cruel a threat. Falkenstein also refusing to consent to give up the fortress, the king ordered him to be executed upon the meadow in the sight of his brother. The rebellious lords were overcome, and the estates in question were all restored to the crown.

For a long time, Václav's mind was disturbed by the thought of this cruel deed; but, finally, he succeeded in quieting his conscience by giving a part of the wealth of his victim to build a beautiful monastery at Zbraslav, about a mile from Prague.

KING VÁCLAV II.

At the time of the murder of Falkenstein, King Václav was nineteen years of age. Owing to the hardships that he had endured during the guardianship of Otto of Brandenburg, whose aim seemed to have been either to kill the prince gradually, or at least leave him undeveloped in mind and body, Václav was of a timid disposition, small in stature, and delicate in health. Nevertheless, he proved to be a very good ruler. Being endowed by nature with many good qualities, as soon as he was at liberty he applied his mind to learning, especially to the study of such subjects as should enable him to restore his country to its former prosperity.

The good effects of the just administration of laws soon began to be felt, and the condition of the peasants was greatly improved. One of the main sources of wealth to the country were the silver-mines at Kuttenberg, which were greatly developed during the reign of Václav II. Having an abundance of silver, King Václav ordered good money of standard purity to be

coined. These were called groats, or groschen, sixty being counted to a pound of silver. The coinage of money belonged exclusively to the rulers of countries, who often abused the privilege, both by making poor money and by frequent changes. Whenever new coins were minted, the people were ordered to return the old, always at a discount, and thus the frequent changes were a source of revenue to the ruler, but an intolerable hardship to the people. Václav did away with this evil by ordering good money to be coined, that remained in circulation, not only in his own country, but was gladly taken as legal tender in all other European States.

During this time the country known afterwards as Poland, was composed of several principalities, the rulers of which were at war with each other. Václav made
As their quarrels showed no signs of being King of Poland. settled, through the instrumentality of Gryfina, the aunt of Václav, the government was offered to him, and thus Bohemia and Poland were united under one crown. Later, similar troubles arising in Hungary, Václav was also offered the crown of that country; but he refused it in favor of his son, who was therefore made King of Hungary.

King Václav was a devoted son of the Church. Being immensely wealthy, he endowed churches and monasteries, granting many privileges to the priesthood. He was also exceedingly fond of show. He aimed to have his court equal in splendor to any court in Europe. During his coronation, in 1297, the feasts and public entertainments were on so grand a scale as had never been seen in Bohemia before. To enable everybody to have a share in the good things provided,

a well was improvised by St. Havel's Church where wine instead of water flowed free for all.

King Václav had a great deal of trouble with his brother-in-law Albert. In 1291, Rudolph died, and Albert immediately began to take measures to be elected king of the Romans, the title Emperor of Germany being for some time discontinued. Having behaved toward Václav in a very domineering manner, the latter opposed the election, and thus Adolph of Nassau became the successful candidate. This brought on a war between the rival kings; and finally, through the mediation of Guita, Václav's wife, the brothers-in-law were reconciled, and Albert secured the crown. But the young queen dying in 1298, the old state of things soon returned. Notwithstanding all of Václav's partiality to the Church, he did not escape having a quarrel with the Pope, that prelate taking the part of Albert against Václav. Albert ordered Václav to give up the crowns of Hungary and Poland, since he had accepted them without his consent. He further demanded that he transfer to him for the term of six years the silver-mines of Kuttenberg, or, if not, pay him the sum of 80,000 pounds silver, since, as vassal of the emperor, he was in duty bound to pay tithes from the mines, which for so many years he had neglected to do.

As Václav refused to comply with these demands, war was declared. The king hastily collected an army, marched into Hungary, and took his son Václav, together with all the crown jewels, back to Bohemia with him. Albert, in the meantime, had invaded Bohemia, marching directly to Kuttenberg, where the silver, doubtless, tempted his cupidity. The city was,

however, well defended by some Bohemian lords, so that all the efforts of Albert to obtain possession of it proved unavailing. Many of his soldiers died of various diseases, said to have been caused by drinking water from a spring that the miners had poisoned. When Václav's army was on the march to help the besieged, Albert became alarmed, and returned back to Austria. The following year preparations were made to continue the war; but Václav was taken ill and shortly after died, being but thirty-four years of age.

VÁCLAV III.

Václav III, although already King of Hungary, at the death of his father was but sixteen years of age, yet he ascended his father's throne without any opposition. King Albert sent messengers to Prague to negotiate for peace, which was readily granted, Václav III giving up Eger and Meissen to Albert, who at the same time agreed not to interfere in his possessions in Poland and Hungary.

King Václav III soon disappointed the hopes of the people. He had, indeed, been endowed by nature with many gifts of mind and heart, but he also possessed a natural inclination to all manner of dissipation. Surrounding himself with young men reckless as himself, he spent his nights in card-playing, drinking, wandering about the streets, and indulging in the lowest debauchery. While under the influence of liquor, he was very generous, and gave away the crown estates to his favorites, as if it were but a pastime. Shortly after making peace with Albert, he gave away the crown of Hungary to his friend Otto, the Duke of Bavaria. He doubtless would have disposed of Poland

in an equally summary manner, had he not been awakened to a sense of duty by the earnest exhortations of the Abbot of Zbraslav, who had formerly been one of the chief counselors of King Václav II. As rebellion had broken out in Poland, he raised an army and began his march into that country; but his career was cut short by the hand of an assassin (1306). The murderer being immediately put to death, it was never ascertained whether it was an act of private revenge, or whether he had been hired to commit the deed by some of the political enemies of Václav.

THE BOHEMIAN STATE UNDER THE PREMYSLS.

King Václav III was the last male descendant of the ancient house of Premysl and Libuse, that had ruled over Bohemia for almost six centuries. The government of Krok and his daughter Libuse had bound the various petty princes under one head, but not very closely. In still more ancient times, the government had been mostly patriarchal, and the various dukes, being descendants of the ancient families, were very jealous of their liberties, and would tolerate no encroachments upon their rights. The relations existing between the ruling family and the people constituted the law of the land. Boleslav the Terrible (935-967) did a great deal for the centralization of power by taking possession of the public lands, also by various arbitrary measures that increased his own wealth at the expense of his subjects. The power of the rulers increased until Premysl Ottokar I secured the title of king for himself as well as for all Bohemian rulers that should come after him.

The legislative power was in the hands of an Assem-

bly and of the king ; the executive belonged to the king alone, while the judicial was independent of him.

The expenses of the government and the court were defrayed from the income of the crown estates ; and when this did not suffice, the Assembly voted taxes, which, therefore, came at irregular intervals. In the earlier stages of the country's growth, the Assembly consisted of all and any free citizens that chose to come ; but when it reached the dignity of being called a State Diet, it was restricted to a few of the privileged classes. These were known as the States, and consisted of the nobility, the clergy, and the knights. Premysl Ottokar I added to this the fourth estate ; viz., the citizens—inhabitants of royal cities.

At first there was no difference in the laws for the large land-owners—or noblemen, as they were called—and the small land-owners, or sedlacy ; but in the course of time the nobility became a privileged class, and the rights of the poor people were continually encroached upon until they were reduced to servitude. This servitude meant several days of labor in the week for the lord, and many other tasks that, at times, were very grievous.

The nobility, in consideration of doing military service, were exempt from taxation, which, for that reason, fell all the more heavily upon the common people.

The conquest of territory was an affair of the crown, carried on at the expense of the king, or by the aid of such noblemen as willingly gave him their assistance.

The power of the government was limited by two outside forces, that of the German emperor and the

Pope. The King of Bohemia, again, was one of the seven electors of the emperor. The emperor claimed feudal sovereignty over the country, enforcing his claim whenever it was for his interest to do so. As was the case in all European countries in those ages, the Pope and priesthood, together with the various orders of monks, exerted a wide and powerful influence. In the earlier history of Christianity this influence was good; but as the Church grew strong in worldly power, it grew weak spiritually, and the monasteries, instead of being the seats of learning, became the dens of wickedness.

Education, at this time, was mostly confined to the clerical profession. Václav III wished to establish a higher institution of learning in Prague; but the nobility opposed this, claiming that, with such superior educational advantages, the clergy would become so powerful that they would regard themselves as above the nobility. The schools were always built in connection with the churches and monasteries.

RUDOLPH OF AUSTRIA, AND HENRY OF CARINTHIA.

When King Václav II died, he left, besides one son, four daughters, the eldest of whom, Anna, was married to Henry, the Duke of Carinthia. When Václav III undertook the expedition to Poland, he left the government in the hands of this duke. When the news of the king's assassination reached Bohemia, some of the nobles thought it advisable to elect Duke Henry to the throne; others preferred Rudolph, the son of Albert, who had succeeded his father in the empire. Before definite action could be taken, the emperor declared that, as Bohemia was a feudal de-

pendency of the empire, he could dispose of it as he saw fit; so he gave it to his son Rudolph. To enforce this claim, he invaded the country with a large army, and the Assembly, partly from choice and partly from necessity, accepted Rudolph as their king, if he would consent to marry one of the Bohemian princesses. He immediately espoused Elizabeth of Poland, the widow of Václav II. This was the beginning of the dynasty of the House of Hapsburg in Bohemia.

Rudolph reigned in Bohemia less than a year. Being surrounded by German favorites, and always consulting the wishes of his father rather than those of the native noblemen, he was hated more and more, and a revolt would doubtless have taken place but for his timely death, which took place while he was besieging the fortress of an unruly noble.

It had been agreed that, should Rudolph die without male heirs, the crown should fall to his brother Frederick. The latter had many friends in the country, among whom the most powerful was Marshal Tobias of Bechyn. But the old candidate, Duke Henry of Carinthia, also had many friends, and thus the election proved to be one of the most exciting ever known in the country. Although Marshal Tobias was ill at the time, he was so zealous for the Austrian succession that he had himself carried into the hall, and there defended the claims of the house of Austria with so much vehemence that he incurred the wrath of most of the Bohemian lords. He charged the noblemen with having the interests of the country so little at heart that they would elect a weak ruler, who could not cope with the enemies of the country. When the lords ordered him to be silent, and not insist upon the

election of a foreigner and an enemy, he replied scornfully: "If you insist upon having a king of your own people, go to the village of Stadice; there, among the peasants, you may possibly find some old uncle of the family of Premysl. Bring him here, and place him upon the royal throne." This slurring reference to the humble origin of their kings, roused the wrath of the lords to the highest pitch. Ulric of Lichtenberg sprang up, and, without a word of warning, plunged his sword into the breast of the unfortunate man. Other acts of violence followed. The friends of Austria fled for their lives, leaving the field clear to the adherents of the Duke of Carinthia, who was elected without any further opposition.

In the meantime Moravia had accepted Frederick as their king, and Albert immediately sent an army to help his son to gain the Bohemian crown; but all these preparations for war came to naught by the death of Albert, who was murdered by his own nephew, to whom he had refused to give the estates that rightfully belonged to him.

At the news of the election of Henry, there were great public rejoicings, the people showing much confidence in the good-will and ability of the new ruler. But all these hopes were doomed to a bitter disappointment; for King Henry soon showed that Marshal Tobias was entirely correct in the estimate of his character; he was weak, and totally unfit to govern.

In the beginning of his reign serious troubles arose between the citizens of some of the large towns and the nobles; but King Henry looked on in abject helplessness, doing nothing whatever either to prevent or settle the quarrels. He felt a repugnance to every-

thing that required active exertion, and spent most of his time in eating and drinking. In his reckless generosity he gave away estate after estate, until his own income was so small that he could not set a good table. Then, being reduced to want, he did not scruple to adopt cruel and unlawful measures to extricate himself out of his difficulties. At last the people neither feared nor loved him, and the lords began to discuss the necessity of deposing him, and electing another king in his place.

At this time there lived at court a young woman who attracted general attention on account of her beauty and intelligence. To unusual wisdom and penetration of mind she added a fearless spirit and true, unfeigning patriotism. Taking an intelligent interest in public affairs, she showed much concern at the sad state in which her country was found. As might be supposed, she belonged to the royal family, and was no one else than Elizabeth, the second daughter of King Václav II.

King Henry soon perceived that, on account of her good qualities, she might prove dangerous to him; consequently he selected a suitable partner from among his lords, and tried to persuade her to an early marriage. But she declined all such offers, doubtless thinking that there was something higher in store for her. In this she was not disappointed. The nobles finally decided to depose Henry, and to set Elizabeth upon the throne, not as an independent ruler, but as the wife of Prince John, of Luxemburg, the son of the German emperor. A deputation was sent for this purpose to the German court, and the marriage was agreed upon, though the emperor showed some reluct-

ance on account of the extreme youthfulness of his son, who was but fourteen, while Elizabeth was eighteen years of age.

This was indeed a strange turn in the affairs of the State. Not long before, a Bohemian nobleman had been openly murdered because he dared espouse the cause of the house of Austria, and now a deputation of Bohemian lords go to the German court to implore the emperor to let his fourteen-year-old boy rule over them. And yet the principle of desiring a native to rule over them was a true one; and it would have been well for the country had their leaders been consistent, and now had chosen a native, rather than a German.

The Princess Elizabeth had endured many a slight and hardship from her royal brother-in-law; and, indeed, for a while it was feared that he cherished evil designs against her, and she was placed under the protection of the city of Nimburg, that had been founded by her father. Now, when she was betrothed to Prince John, it seemed that her trials had ended, and that a life of happiness and usefulness to her nation was opening before her. The marriage was to be celebrated at Spire, where the German king and queen, with all their court, were waiting the arrival of the bride. The emperor met her at the threshold, and, giving her his right hand while he held his son with the left, he said, deeply moved: "Welcome, royal child of Bohemia! Thou hast thus far been an orphan; henceforth thou shalt be my daughter, and I shall be thy father. Here is my only son, thy future husband. Forget the trials thou hast endured at home, and rejoice with us!" Queen Margaret stood by, im-

patient for the moment when she could embrace her new daughter. At this loving reception the bystanders were moved to tears.

After the marriage, which was celebrated with great splendor, King John went with an army to Bohemia to win the crown that had been offered him; for, however weak and dissipated King Henry was, it was not expected that he would lay down his honors without a struggle, which supposition proved to be well founded. Calling to his assistance Frederick, the Margrave of Meissen, King Henry prepared for a stout defense of his rights. For some time John did not dare approach Prague, but captured some cities in the southern part of Bohemia; but finally he turned his march to the capital, the gates of which were opened to him through the treachery of some lords. King Henry, seeing that all was lost, left the country.

KING JOHN OF LUXEMBURG.

After the departure of King Henry from Prague, a Diet was immediately called, in which the lords took the oath of allegiance to their new king; and John, as a ruler of a new dynasty, gave a written agreement promising to preserve the liberties of the country. As this was the first document of the kind ever given by a King of Bohemia, some of the provisions deserve special notice: The king promised to call no foreigners into the land to be his officers and counselors; he was forbidden either to give away or sell any of the crown estates to foreigners; in case of the death of some of his subjects, the king was to lay no claim to their inheritance, but all such inheritance was to fall to the relatives of the deceased, and only in default of

these, to the crown ; no Bohemian lord was ever to be ordered to go on any military expedition out of the country ; the king was to impose no taxes except for his coronation and to raise the dowry for daughters of the house royal ; and all such taxes were to be according to a fixed rate.

After this agreement, the coronation was held, and King John established in the government.

Although one of the articles of the royal document provided for the exclusion of all foreigners from the government, nevertheless, because of the extreme youthfulness of the king, the emperor gave him several German lords to be his counselors. The Bohemian lords did not object to this, since the chief of these was Peter, the Archbishop of Mayence, who had been greatly loved and honored by Václav II. Later, when the German lords began to grow too domineering, King John was held to the agreement, and ordered to dismiss them.

When the nobles had established King John and Queen Elizabeth upon the throne of Bohemia, they imagined that they had done their country a good service, and that his reign would be an era of peace and prosperity to all the people. These hopes, however were doomed to the bitterest disappointment. In the whole history of the country, the government of King John of Luxemburg was unquestionably one of the worst ; and in regard to private life, a more unfortunate marriage could scarcely have been contracted ; and, doubtless, the domestic troubles in the royal family were, to some extent, the cause of the public disturbances.

Although Queen Elizabeth was a very beautiful

woman, who would have graced any court in Europe, the boy husband was too undeveloped either to appreciate her noble qualities or comprehend the duties and sacredness of married life. He soon grew tired of her, and began to take long journeys to various countries in Europe, neglecting both his wife and the government. His ideal seemed to be a knight-errant, who wandered about the world in search of adventures. His exploits at tournaments made him famous all over Europe. He was especially popular at the French court, which was due partly to his lavish generosity, and partly because he was bound by ties of relationship to the French king, the latter having married his sister Mary. While the French lords and ladies sounded his praises to the skies, his own subjects cursed him, calling upon Heaven to deliver them from his tyrannous exactions. He cared so little for his kingdom and his family that, most probably, he would have staid away altogether, had he not been obliged to return, from time to time, to replenish his purse. His income proving insufficient to carry on his extravagant life, he resorted to all manner of extortions, not scrupling to rob his own household, so that, at times, they suffered for the necessities of life.

The follies of the king reached a climax, when, being in need of funds, he tried to exchange the kingdom of Bohemia for a petty province upon the Rhine. The queen, refusing to give her consent, brought upon herself the wrath of her truant husband, who treated her worse than before.

At this time one of the most powerful lords of the kingdom was Henry of Lipa. For some time he had ruled Moravia as the regent of John ; but his haughti-

ness was such that he offended the queen, through whose influence he was removed. For a while civil war raged as the result of this. Finally the offended lord was reinstated in his office and reconciled to the king, but hating the queen all the more.

Elizabeth's refusal to consent to the bartering away of her country, although approved of by all the lords, nevertheless was now used as a pretext to set the king against her. Lord Henry succeeded in making him believe that Elizabeth aimed to deprive him of the crown in favor of her son Václav, a child three years old. King John hurried to Bohemia in great wrath, seized the unsuspecting queen, and cast her in prison in the city of Melnik. The infant son was sent, with two nurses, to the fortress of Loketsky, and there kept in a dark tower for two months. Finally the queen was rescued by some lords, and taken back to Prague, where a suitable residence was provided for her. Two years later (1321), a reconciliation was effected between the royal couple, but it was not of long duration. The lords unfriendly to the queen succeeded in rousing the king against her, and this time she was obliged to flee for her life. She found refuge at the court of Bavaria, the Duke of Bavaria having been betrothed to her oldest daughter, Margaret. The boy Václav was then taken to the court of France, where he remained for many years. At his confirmation he was named Charles, after his uncle Charles, the King of France, and it is by this name that he is known in history.

Two years after the queen's flight to Bavaria, King John, learning of her innocence, gave her permission to return to Bohemia.

Queen Elizabeth, however, was not blameless. She possessed an exceedingly proud and haughty disposition, was very jealous of honors and dignities that she thought rightfully belonged to her, and unrelenting in her vengeance against those who offended her in this respect. For many years there was trouble in the land on account of the rivalry between Queen Elizabeth and Elizabeth of Poland, widow of Václav II.* Elizabeth of Poland held her court at Hradec (Königgratz), and was spoken of as the Queen of Hradec, in distinction from the Queen of Bohemia. Lord Henry of Lipa was a favorite of the Queen of Hradec, and both he and that queen were guilty of many a slight against the unfortunate Queen of Bohemia. An example of this was the marriage of Agnes, the daughter of the Queen of Hradec and Václav II, hence half-sister to Elizabeth. This marriage was contracted without the knowledge and consent of the King and Queen of Bohemia, and consequently, to say the least, was a lack of courtesy equal to an insult. Both the king and queen regarded it as such, and the Lord of Lipa, at whose advice the marriage had been contracted, was degraded from his high offices. Several powerful lords taking his part, the country was plunged into civil war. This, however, was not the only war caused by the rivalry between the two queens. On one occasion, when the atrocities committed were too frightful to behold, Queen Elizabeth, instead of relenting and showing some pity for her subjects, who really were not at all to blame, took her children and went to her fortress of Loketsky, where she remained until peace was restored.

* Václav's second wife, hence not the mother of Elizabeth.

The real and imaginary wrongs of Queen Elizabeth, the rivalry between her and the Queen of Hradec, the intrigues of the lords, the wars between them,—all this has furnished rich material for several brilliant historical romances, produced by modern Bohemian novelists.

King John's continual absence from his country and his constant demand for funds, together with the wars carried on among the various nobles, brought the country to a condition of wretchedness, such as it had not known for a long time. In the absence of some strong hand to govern, the strong oppressed the weak, there being no means of redress. The land was infested with robbers, who plundered the inhabitants without let or hindrance. Sometimes whole villages were destroyed, the inhabitants scattered in all directions, many of whom perished in the woods from starvation. And King John himself became a public robber. His own sources of income having been drained to the last farthing, he robbed the churches of their ornaments, and stealing the crown and the crown jewels from the palace, he sold them, using the money for his own private expenses. In consideration for some service done the Pope John XXII, he was given permission to collect at one time the tithes that the Pope claimed to be due for three years. This vast sum of money he also appropriated to his own use.

In the darkest hour of the reign of King John, Elizabeth died. She was but thirty-nine years of age, but broken down in health and spirits, and forsaken by all except her seven-year-old daughter. As the dawn of her life had been glorious, so her sun now went down in the utmost gloom.

Queen Elizabeth's
Death.

In 1333, three years after the death of Queen Elizabeth, a new day seemed to dawn for the poor, beggared kingdom of Bohemia. King John, Prince Charles. betaking himself to his county of Luxemburg, sent into Bohemia his son Charles, then seventeen years of age, to be his regent.

Charles, although young in years, was old in wisdom and experience. The French court, which to his father had been but the theater for the display of his chivalric qualities, proved to the son a school where he learned political economy and statecraft. Grief for the loss of his mother, whom he tenderly loved, and from whom he had been so cruelly separated, doubtless had considerable influence in softening his character and making him grave and thoughtful far beyond his years.

His dignified bearing and conversation soon won the hearts of the people, and this time their confidence was not misplaced.

The first thing that he did was to set in order the royal housekeeping. Like the regents before him, he was still obliged to send a great deal of money to his father; nevertheless he was able, out of the special subsidy granted him by the Diet, to redeem several of the crown estates; and in two years, by dint of great economy, he redeemed ten estates with their fortresses in Bohemia, and six in Moravia. In these he established courts for the regular administration of justice to people of the adjacent territory. He undertook long journeys through the land, often in disguise, diligently seeking to make himself acquainted with the condition and needs of the people.

The palace of Hradschin having been destroyed by fire a few years before, King John, instead of making

any effort to rebuild it, preferred to take up his abode in a citizen's private residence in the Old Town of Prague; but no sooner had Charles seen the ruins than he began to study how the misfortune might be remedied. The lords were helpful to him in this, and soon the palace walls gleamed against the sun, where for a number of years there had been nothing but ruins. The palace being rebuilt, Charles brought over his youthful wife, Blanche, the daughter of the French king.

The popularity of Charles, however, did not please his father; for the lords, that profited by the disturbances in the land, soon succeeded in arousing the suspicions of the jealous king, whom they warned to beware of his son, that his zealous effort to improve the condition of the people was merely to win their good will, so that he might usurp the government. The king immediately deprived Charles of the regency, leaving him only the title of Margrave of Moravia and the income from a single estate. Charles bore the indignity without a murmur, and left the country to help his brother Frederick to protect his estates in Tyrol against the encroachments of the Emperor of Germany.

In the winter of 1337, John, accompanied by his son Charles, went upon an expedition with the German knights against Lithuania. The exposure to the cold and damp weather brought on a disease of the eyes to the king, and afterwards he became totally blind. Nobody in Bohemia pitied him; the people looked upon it as a punishment from Heaven for his misdeeds, and especially for his robbery of their churches.

After the death of Queen Elizabeth, King John had

married again; as might be expected, a foreigner, Beatrice of the house of Bourbon. He brought her to Prague with her infant son Václav; but the people manifested no joy at her arrival, on all occasions showing their preference for Charles and his wife Blanche, which so displeased the king that he sent Charles out of the country, and finally departed himself, leaving the government in the hands of a regent. At this the people manifested so much displeasure that John, fearing a rebellion, reinstated his son in the government, and, in 1341, declared him his successor.

King John continued to extort money from his kingdom until Charles himself would bear it no longer. In 1342 he gave his father 5,000 pounds of silver, and ordered him not to come into the country again for two years. Doubtless there would have been much trouble, if not civil war, between Charles and his father had the latter remained idle in his county of Luxemburg; but fortunately he went to assist his friend, the French king, against the English, where his ignominious life was ended by a glorious death. This was at the battle of Crecy (1346), which proved so disastrous to the French. When all was lost, the Bohemian lords that had accompanied King John to the war, begged him to flee and save his life; but he replied: "God forbid that a king of Bohemia should ever flee before the enemy!" Then, ordering his horse to be fastened to those of two of his most faithful knights—since, on account of his blindness, he himself could not have directed him—the three rushed into the thickest battle, being immediately cut to pieces by the enemy. Some fifty of the Bohemian knights perished in the same way. Charles, too, was present in this battle;

but, being wounded in the earlier part of the action, he was carried from the battle-field by the orders of his father, who, after all, did not wish to leave Bohemia without a ruler. The memorable words of the king became the watchword of Bohemian soldiers; and this, perhaps, was the only legacy that was left to Bohemia by her knightly ruler, King John of Luxemburg.

CHAPTER IV.

FROM CHARLES IV TO THE HUSSITE WARS.

CHARLES IV.

WHILE Charles was in France with his father, a dispute was going on between Pope Clement VI and Louis, the German emperor. The Pope finally succeeded in winning the electors to his side, Louis was deposed, and the Bohemian king elected in his place. As King of Bohemia he was the first of that name; but as emperor he is known in history as Charles IV.

Although duly elected, Charles was by no means in possession of the imperial crown; and, for a while, war with Louis seemed to be inevitable; but when hostilities were on the point of breaking out, Louis died, and Charles imagined now that he could secure the prize without any opposition. But here he was mistaken. Two of the electors declared the election of Charles null and void, and began to look about for another candidate. But it seems that the imperial crown was not so very desirable, judging from the scarcity of aspirants to the dignity. It was first offered to Edward of England, who refused it; then to the Margrave of Meissen, who likewise declined the honor; and finally to Count Günther of Schwarzburg, who accepted it. This Günther was a mercenary adventurer, who had served under various princes, and who cared so little for the imperial crown that when Charles offered to buy it of him, he gladly accepted the proffered sum of 20,000 pounds of silver.

As Bohemia had always had a great deal of trouble

from the interference in her affairs by the German emperors, it was of great moment to Charles to have undisputed possession of the imperial throne. He therefore attempted, by various diplomatic measures, to win over the opposing electors. His wife Blanche having died, he married Anna, the daughter of the Elector of Palatinate upon the Rhine, and gave his own daughter in marriage to Rudolph, the Duke of Austria. By these measures he succeeded in obtaining undisputed possession of the imperial throne.

The political events in the reign of Charles IV are not of much significance. Although he had obtained an excellent military training under his warlike father, and had carried himself valiantly in the few battles that he had engaged in, nevertheless he had no love for war, and avoided it at all costs. He devoted his whole time to the improvement of his kingdom, so that the history of his reign is more a record of the reforms he introduced than any account of political events.

Even before the death of his father, Charles had succeeded in inducing the Pope to change the bishopric of Prague to an archbishopric. This was Archbishop in Prague. an event of the greatest importance. As a bishopric, Bohemia was under the jurisdiction of the Archbishop of Mayence; and in those days, when Church and State were inseparable, this often caused a great deal of inconvenience, if not hardship, to the government. The negotiations for this change afford a curious illustration of the geographical knowledge of those times. Charles was required to take an oath that Mayence was a distance of twelve days' journey from Prague, and that, to reach it, the Bohemians were obliged to cross foreign territory; and further,

that the Čech tongue was Slavonic and not Teutonic. The first Archbishop of Bohemia was Ernest of Pardubice, a man of much learning, and greatly beloved on account of his goodness and integrity.

In the year 1347, Charles was crowned in Prague as King of Bohemia, the ceremony being performed by the new archbishop. For the occasion, Charles ordered a beautiful crown to be The Coronation. made of the purest gold, and, lest it should meet the fate of the old crown of Bohemia, he had it placed upon the head of the skeleton of St. Václav, whose remains rested in the cathedral at Hradschin. Later, he obtained from the Pope a document pronouncing a fearful curse upon any one who would dare touch with sacrilegious hands this national treasure. Owing to the fact that the crown was kept in the tomb of Bohemia's patron saint, it is always called St. Václavian.

In 1354, Charles, together with his wife Anna, undertook the journey to the capital of Christendom, to be crowned by the Pope as King of the Journey to Rome. Romans. He was received in the Italian cities with great demonstrations of joy, which, however, were not sincere. After his coronation, while tarrying in the city of Pisa, he was attacked by the people and soldiers, and had not his attendants performed prodigies of valor, both he and his wife would surely have been cut to pieces by the enraged populace. Thanking God for his deliverance, and liberally rewarding his guards, he hurried out of the country.

In 1348 the Pope issued a bull for the es- The University. tablishment of a university in Prague. This may be regarded as the great event in the reign of Charles IV.

There had been opportunities for higher education in the country connected with the monasteries and collegiate churches; but none of these had the power to grant degrees, and a college degree was one of the requisites for candidates to some of the highest offices in the State. As there was no university in the whole of the German Empire, students aspiring to those honors were obliged to journey either to Paris or to Bononi in Italy, either of which incurred much hardship and great expense.

As Charles had obtained his education in Paris, he modeled the new university after the one in Paris. There were four faculties—Theology, Jurisprudence, Medicine, and Philosophy. The permanent head of the university was the Archbishop of Prague; but a rector was elected every year, who had direct supervision of the different faculties. The head of each faculty was a deacon, also elected for a year. The elections were carried on by nations of which there were four; viz., Bohemian, Bavarian, Polish, and Saxon. The Bohemian electors included Hungarians, Moravians, and other Slavic peoples; the Bavarian, all Germans; the Polish, students from Silesia and Russia; the Saxons, Danes and Swedes.

At first the professors delivered lectures in their own houses; those of theology, in some of the churches. The same year the university was organized, a college was built which provided lecture halls for twelve professors.

The university had a direct influence upon public education; for whoever desired a degree was required not only to pass all the examinations, but to spend two years in teaching in some of the parish schools



CHARLES IV FOUNDING THE UNIVERSITY OF PRAGUE.

of the country. Having fulfilled these requirements, the student received the degree of Bachelor; but this did not entitle him to lecture in the university, this privilege being enjoyed only by those who possessed the degree of Doctor or Master. The Bachelors, however, were permitted to read lectures approved by the faculties of some other university.

The growth of the university was something phenomenal. In less than fifty years from the time it was founded, there were 200 Doctors, 500 Masters, and 30,000 students.

The rapid growth of this institution was due to the encouragement given it by the emperor. He not only richly endowed it, providing it also with good libraries, but he took a personal interest in the work. He was present at the lectures and public disputations, at times even neglecting his meals in order to hear the closing of the debates.

Charles was also a patron of art. Under his direction there was formed a fraternity of painters, sculptors, carvers in wood, and jewelers. This, to a certain extent, answered the purpose of an Academy of Arts, and continued in existence till the eighteenth century.

He also passed many wise measures for the encouragement and protection of trade and agriculture.

Under his wise administration of laws the country prospered, increasing in wealth and population. This was especially the case with Prague, whose ancient limits of Old Town and Small Side became far too narrow to accommodate the increased population. Charles, therefore, laid out a suburb, which he named Carlstadt, but which the people persisted in calling

New Town. The growth of New Town was very rapid; for Charles not only granted special privileges to those who builded there, but put up many fine residences at his own expense, renting them upon very easy terms. Among the other structures that were put up by Charles was the cathedral at Hradschin, which was enlarged and partly built in this reign, the fortress of Carlstein, numerous churches and monasteries, and the stone bridge across the Moldau. The fortress of Carlstein was intended to be impregnable to all the munitions of war used in those days, and was to be the safe for the crown jewels and other valuables of the kingdom

Among the many good qualities of this king, that which especially won him the hearts of the people was the respect he showed for their native Bohemian language. A number of rulers before him had shown a strong preference for the German tongue; and this is by no means surprising, since so many of the rulers, as well as the noblemen, had gone to Germany to get their wives. In regard to foreign wives, Charles was not the exception; but he early appreciated the importance of the cultivation of the vernacular as the means of information among the masses, and so he set the example of using the language himself. After his ten years' stay in Paris, he had entirely forgotten the language of his noble mother; but he set to work, and soon was able to read and write as readily in Bohemian as in any of the other four languages* that he was master of.

Under his patronage, many books were translated

* Latin, Italian, French, German.

into Bohemian ; and further to encourage the cultivation of the native tongue, a convent of Slavonic monks was established in New Town. This was used as a means to cultivate friendly relations between Bohemia and other Slavonic nations. The Bohemian language became the language of court and in the government of cities and towns ; but in the previous reigns, the German tongue had gained such an ascendancy that even so energetic a ruler as Charles was not able to stem the tide of foreign influence.

In the year 1356 a Diet was held at Prague, at which Charles offered to the consideration of the States a new code of laws, called *Majestas Carolina* ; but it was rejected, only some of the provisions being embodied in the laws of the land. Reform in
Law.

The laws of Bohemia, like those of Germany, France, and England, had an historical basis, the decisions of the Supreme Court being recorded and used as precedents. These records were kept in Latin, although the discussions were in the vernacular. The sessions of the court were open to all ; the accused could plead his own case or have counsel. At first there was a jury, but later it was discontinued. The grave faults in the laws were, that the judges appealed too often to the so-called God's judgments. Ordeals were common, and the casting of lots also. Confusio, or Error, was also resorted to. Thus, if a person became confused or stammered, it was said that God had judged him. Charles declared that such practices were a wicked tempting of Providence, and therefore they were abolished.

More stringent laws were passed in regard to robbers. A law was passed providing that, even if such a

criminal were pardoned so that he escaped the gallows, he was to remain dishonored forever.

Although Charles introduced many reforms, what he did came far short of what he would have liked to do. During the reign of his father, the nobility were left to be absolute rulers over the peasants upon their estates; and now, if Charles would be at peace with them, he must leave them to a considerable extent in the enjoyment of their assumed privileges. This is well proved by their refusal to accept the *Majestas Carolina*. Some of the provisions of this code of laws were such as to make one shudder at the inhumanity of those times, when such laws could be proposed and rejected. Some of the provisions were as follows: "It is not becoming for a lord to put out the eyes of his people or of strangers. Should any one be guilty of this, he falls into the displeasure of the king, and his goods to his mercy. A lord must not carry himself proudly to lay upon the block and cut off the limbs of his subjects." One would naturally infer that, at times, some of the lords had resorted to such horrible modes of punishment, otherwise Charles would not have incorporated this law in his *Majestas Carolina*.

Some of the laws in vogue at this time prove the wide difference between peasants and the higher classes. Thus if peasants or citizens had wronged each other, they were permitted to fight with clubs, not swords; for they were *chlapi* (churls). But if a person of lower birth hit one belonging to one of the upper classes, his hand was cut off, and he was obliged to give security that he would not seek vengeance. Should a peasant strike his lord, his head was forfeit; the lord, however, could do with him what he pleased.

The emperor alone could not change such barbarous laws; but he did what he could to alleviate the condition of the poor people and to some extent redress their wrongs. The week before Easter and the week following were devoted to hearing the cause of the poor and oppressed. Charles, as judge, sat upon a throne put up at the main entrance to the court of the palace, where the widow, the orphan, and the peasant could bring their grievances without any ceremony, and receive quick justice. In his travels over the country, he often stopped in the various towns to hear the cause of the oppressed.

In a season of great want he ordered the building of a wall about the city so as to give the poor people employment. It was no wonder that the people blessed him, calling him the father of their country.

Shortly after the Diet held in Prague for the consideration of reforms needed in the administration of law, an imperial Diet was held in Nurem-^{The Golden Bull,} burg. Delegates from all the States composing the empire were present, and many important measures were discussed; but what rendered this Diet memorable was the passage of the set of laws known as the Golden Bull. This decree, which, a German author says, was the only good thing that the Emperor Charles IV did for Germany, remained for centuries the fundamental law, governing and holding together the loose confederation of States composing the German Empire.

The Golden Bull fixed the number of electors at seven, three ecclesiastical and four secular. They were the Archbishops of Mainz, Treves, and Cologne; the Count Palatine of the Rhine; the Duke of Saxony; the

Margrave of Brandenburg, and the King of Bohemia. Each of these princes was to hold a high office under the emperor, those of the princes being merely nominal, while those of the clerics were real.

The other articles in the Golden Bull provided for the regulation of taxes, disposition of the revenue, coinage of money, limitations of the rights and privileges of cities, and various other laws concerning the government of the empire.

The Golden Bull, so excellent in itself, met with hot displeasure from the Pope, who could not look on with indifference when he found himself without any voice in the elections for the emperor. As a compensation for this slight, Charles was obliged to grant many concessions to the clergy.

Charles IV was very pious, spending much time in fasting and prayer; and partly on account of his own religious tendencies, and partly on account of the pressure of events, he granted many favors to the clergy. Many new churches and monasteries sprang up, and the old were endowed and improved in appearance. At the present time, to the five millions of inhabitants in Bohemia, there are nineteen hundred parish churches, while in the time of Charles there were twenty-three hundred, and the population was only about three millions. Not only did the churches increase in number, but also in wealth, which was especially the case with the higher ones. Thus the Archbishop of Prague had the revenues coming from four hundred villages and some dozen cities, which enabled him to hold a court equal in magnificence to some of the princes of the empire. The higher clergy lived in idleness, luxury, and indulged

in all manner of dissipation ; and the lower priesthood followed their example as far as they were able. Many persons totally unfit for a clerical life succeeded in securing benefices with large incomes, and then lived like great lords, their duties being performed by some hired substitute. As church service became more and more perfunctory, clerical life became easier ; consequently, more young men crowded into it than into any other profession, until there were far more priests than places. To provide all with something to do, or rather with some income, the larger churches were permitted to have several priests, each to be paid mostly by what he could make in performing the various church duties, such as christenings, burials, confirmations, and the like. This distribution of labor led to much jealousy and hatred. The greed of the priests drove them to conduct that was scandalous ; fierce brawls were an every-day occurrence, and even bloody fights were indulged in.

In granting so many privileges and concessions to the Church, Charles IV acted from the purest motives ; but the results were evil, and that continually. He sowed the land full of dragon's teeth, which, springing up in the following reigns, so tore and lacerated the country that it barely escaped with its life.

One of the most grievous faults of Charles IV was his excessive fondness for his family. When his son Václav was born, the public manifestations of joy ordered to be made by the king were The Prince Václav. ludicrous, if not blasphemous. Then, in his anxiety to secure the succession to this infant, he had him crowned King of Bohemia when a mere child. Nor was this all ; in direct violation of the provisions of

the Golden Bull, the boy was also elected King of the Romans. Doubtless these premature honors were the cause of much of the incompetency of Václav, and the dire misfortunes that came to the country because of it.

Death of Charles IV. Charles IV died in 1378, in the sixty-third year of his age. He was buried in the cathedral at Hradschin, where his body rests to this day.

Personal Appearance. In regard to personal appearance, Charles IV was rather small and thick-set; he was somewhat round-shouldered, his head and neck thrust forward; his face was broad, his features coarse, his eyes large. He dressed in plain black broadcloth, without any ornamentation whatever, his coat being buttoned up to his chin. His favorite pastime was whittling. He whittled on all occasions, even when sitting as judge and listening to the most serious cases. At times it seemed that he was paying more attention to his knife than to the pleadings of the counsel; but the decisions he gave proved that he had not lost a word.

In the management of his domestic affairs, Charles was economical to stinginess; but in great undertakings he showed a generosity truly princely.

In affairs of state he listened patiently to his counselors, but generally acted according to his own mind, and a decision once reached was held as final.

Although five centuries have passed since this Father of Bohemia lived—and since that time fearful storms and changes have come over the country—yet, at the present time, no one can travel over the land without meeting on every side works that perpetuate the name of Charles IV, rendering it dear to every Bohemian heart.

SOCIAL CONDITION AND CIVILIZATION IN BOHEMIA IN
THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY.

As early as the thirteenth century the people began to be divided into two nations, the Germans and Bohemians. The Bohemian language was used at first by the native nobility, the ^{Nationality.} clergy, and the common people; the German, in the royal cities and villages settled by German immigrants. The German settlers brought with them their own customs and habits, which differed considerably from those of the natives; but, in course of time, the two civilizations became blended, although it must be confessed that the Bohemians became far more German than the Germans Bohemian. This was due to the fact that, for several reigns, both the rulers and the nobility showed a morbid preference for everything that was foreign.

Had it not been for the denationalizing tendency, the German immigrants would have been a benefit to the country. They generally were industrious and enterprising, and aided considerably in developing the resources of the country. It was mostly due to them that the silver-mines of Kuttenberg and German Brod became such a source of wealth. They also helped to improve the manufactures of the country. Yet these were not in a high state of excellence; for linens were imported from France and Bavaria, broadcloths from Ghent, and Bohemian goods found a market only in Poland and Hungary.

The unfavorable side of the German colonists was that, in time of war, they invariably joined the side of the enemy.

Like most Slavonic nations, the Bohemian people

leaned chiefly to the cultivation of the soil, preferring
Agriculture. this to the more active life of tradesmen
and merchants. This was not only the case
with the peasants, but noblemen and great prelates
gained most of their wealth from agriculture. As a
result of this, grain was exported to the surrounding
countries.

In the earlier history of Bohemia we find the people
a peace-loving race, that would not engage in war,
War. only in case of self-defense. But in course
of time the heroic sentiments of the days
of chivalry penetrated among the lowest classes, and
a military hero became the highest ideal of greatness.
Thus peasant youths were eager to enlist into the
armies of lords that had won military renown.

The spirit of chivalry that had borne such excellent
fruit in the past century began to wane. Tour-
Chivalry. naments, indeed, were still engaged in, and
a sort of knightly gallantry was kept up;
but the spirit of humanity and genuine politeness had
passed away, leaving in its place nothing but empty
show and stiff formality.

During the reign of John, the old Slavonic styles
of dress were mostly abandoned, the higher classes
Dress. adopting French styles. The men delighted
in long beards and long, curling locks; instead
of caps, they wore high-cornered hats of various
colors; their coats were short and narrow, with wide,
pointed sleeves that hung at the side like inverted
mule's ears; knee-breeches and tight boots finished
the costume, unless we regard the belt—behind which
there was always a knife or a sword—as a part of the
dress.

One of the most pleasant features of life in Bohemia at this time was the sacredness of home and the fidelity of wives and husbands to their marriage vows. Although youths and maidens indulged in free social intercourse, and dancing was the most common amusement, the principles of morality were so deeply rooted in their minds that they rarely overstepped the limits of virtue and chastity. In conversation, however, there was not so much delicacy as at the present time, many expressions being used that would appear coarse to us. But in this the Bohemians were not greater sinners than other nations of those days, as is proven by contemporary literature.

Domestic
Life.

During this century the people clung, with implicit confidence, to the teachings of Rome. But when the clergy became so corrupt that they did not even take the pains to conceal their scandalous lives, the more thoughtful people began to wonder if the Church could be considered holy when its chief leaders were so utterly debased. The schism in the Church of two Popes, the one at Rome and the other at Avignon in France, struggling for the ascendancy, also furnished material for this speculation.

Religion.

There was a school connected with each convent ; but in these mostly religion was taught. The schools where the boys could obtain the rudiments of education were the parish and village schools. As might be expected, the girls received no education whatever. After the establishment of the university in Prague, the common schools were greatly improved, since so many students, on the point of graduation, were engaged in teaching in the villages.

Schools.

At this time there were in Bohemia 13,360 villages,* 300 towns, and 100 fortified cities. In the larger towns and cities, there were schools connected with the churches or monasteries, where boys obtained quite a thorough education, such education being sought with a view to official or clerical life.

During the reign of Charles, architects from other lands were invited into the country, and many beautiful churches commenced. The most prominent of these were the St. Vitus Cathedral, the Church of Mary of the Snow in New Town, and the Slavonic convent of Emaus. The public buildings were the royal palace and the chateau of Carlstein.

Æneas Silvius, the historian, declared that there was no other European State that equaled Bohemia in the number, size, and magnificence of its churches.

Among the painters may be mentioned Theodoric, who painted the frescoes in Carlstein; Zbysek of Trotiny, famous for miniature-painting. His pictures excel in vividness, originality, brilliant coloring, and fine finish. Some of them are still extant, being kept in the museum at Prague. Hodek also helped with the frescoes of Carlstein, but he was famous for the many illuminated pontificals that he executed for the bishops and higher clergy.

Mathew Hutsky was at the head of the fraternity of artists. He is chiefly known as the teacher of Ferdinand from Eyser, who afterwards became famous as a painter.

* In Bohemia the peasants live in villages; consequently there are many more villages to a given population than in the United States, where the farmers live on isolated farms.

The fragments that have been left of the Kralodvorsky Rukohis (Queen's-court MS.) show that the native literature had reached a high state of development long before the age of Charles ^{Literature.}

IV. Besides the native literature, there was much that was introduced into the country from other nations. Bohemian kings and noblemen spent much of their time in Paris, which was then the Rome of the civilized world, and through their instrumentality the intellectual wealth of France was brought to Bohemia. Thus they were familiar with the tales of King Arthur, and those of Guido of Colonna, about the siege of Troy, and the then famous epic "The Alexandriad." The Alexandriad in the Bohemian language was more an adaptation than a translation. The diction is rich and polished, the style beautiful, the verse full and melodious. Legends of saints were one of the most favorite forms of literature; and mystery plays were acted at this time.

Smil Flaska was one of the most popular of poets. "The Nova Rada" (New Council) was regarded as his best work. A young lion, about to assume the government, calls upon all the creatures of the forest to give him counsel, which each does according to his own character and mode of life. There is some wit and humor in the poem; but its popularity was, doubtless, due to the fact that it flattered the vanity of the king by advancing the idea that royalty in itself was endowed by Heaven with wisdom superior to that of all other mortals of the realm.

A writer of much originality and independence of thought was Thomas of Stitný; but of him we shall speak hereafter.

THE BOHEMIAN REFORMATION.

We have now reached the most important period in Bohemian history, that of the Reformation of the fifteenth century. This great movement, which stirred the nation to its lowest depths—and, indeed, almost effected its ruin—has by some short-sighted critics been attributed to the teachings of John Hus, but a more fallacious theory could hardly be advanced. The nation had reached a state of high intellectual advancement on the part of the laity, and gross corruption on the part of the clergy, which made a reformation inevitable, even if there had been no such a man as Hus. Another error that is taught by many authors is, that the Reformation was due to the influence of the doctrines of Wycliffe, as expounded by some of the doctors of the university, and especially by Hus. These teachings did have considerable influence; but they would never have produced such tremendous results had not the ground been so well prepared to receive them.

One of the main causes that led to the Reformation was the establishment of the University of Prague. This elevated the standard of culture and intelligence, and prepared the people for the teaching of the forerunners of Hus.

THE FORERUNNERS OF HUS.

Charles IV, seeing the gross immorality of the clergy, cast about for some means to remedy this evil.

With this end in view, he invited to Prague
Conrad Wald- an Augustine monk, Conrad Waldhausen,
hausen. who had gained much popularity in Vienna on account of his zealous preaching. At first Waldhausen was

made the rector of the Church of Leitomic, but later was promoted to that in the Teyn Church in the Old Town. The only preaching at this time was that of the begging friars, the parish priests thinking they did their whole duty when they recited the mass, or went through some of the prescribed Church services. Waldhausen was a great preacher, and his native eloquence was rendered all the more effective by his burning zeal to reform the clergy as well as the laity. The best account of Waldhausen is given by Benes Krabice, of Veitmil, who speaks as follows :

“In the year 1369, on the Feast of the Conception of the Virgin, died that illustrious preacher, Brother Conrad, rector of St. Mary ante Lætam Curiam, in the city of Prague. An Austrian by birth, a man of great learning and greater eloquence, he saw, when he came to Bohemia, all men given up to excesses, luxury in many respects exceeding all limits; and through his preaching so reformed the people that many put aside the vanities of the world, serving God with zeal.”

Among the good things that this man did, was one especially great and memorable: “The ladies of Prague, who had hitherto worn large and magnificent mantles, as well as other clothes ornamented in the most extravagant manner, put away these things, and went daily in plain clothing to hear the words of this distinguished man. He preached also dauntlessly against usurers, and other unjust possessors of property, and especially against those religious persons who had obtained orders through simoniacal practices. As a result of this, the begging friars rose up against him, loading him with abuse. But he, a man of perfect love, endured it all with patience for God’s sake.”

A man of even greater talents, and one whose labors for reform produced more permanent results was

MILIČ OF KREMSIER.

Milič was by birth a Moravian, who was unacquainted with the German language until he studied it so as to be able to preach both to the Germans and Bohemians. He held several positions of trust and honor. For some time he was the chief official in the imperial chancery, and later a canon in St. Vitus Cathedral. In 1363 he resigned his honors and preferments, determined to follow Christ in poverty and humility. The archbishop in vain tried to retain his services. He said to Milič: "What better thing can you do than help a poor archbishop to feed the flock intrusted to his care?" But the sturdy evangelist remained unmoved in his decision to preach the gospel to the poor. For some time he preached in the small town of Klatov; but, beginning to enjoy life, he thought it was a temptation of the evil one to lead him back to the paths of ease; and so he gave up his charge, returned to Prague, and began preaching in St. Nicholas on the Small Side.

At first, Milič had but few hearers, and some of those mocked his Moravian accent; but his earnestness of purpose soon won him the esteem of the people, and his words began to be discussed in all parts of the city. At length he became so popular that, in order to give all who wished to hear him the opportunity to do so, he was obliged to preach several times a day in different parts of the city.

Through his excessive zeal against the moral depravity of those times, and his unceasing study of the

Apocalypse and the Prophets, his mind became filled with extraordinary ideas respecting the latter days, the coming of Antichrist, and the end of the world. Himself fearing that his views might be erroneous, he resolved to undertake a journey to Rome to seek light upon these subjects. The Pope and other dignitaries of the Church received him with much kindness and consideration, and, it seems, put his mind to rest in regard to these questions; for when he returned to Prague they no longer were the prominent topics of his discourses.

When Conrad Waldhausen died, Milič took his place in Teyn Church. He preached there daily in German, while another priest delivered in Bohemian, in St. Giles's Church, the sermons that Milič had prepared.

One of the reforms instituted by Milič was entirely unique in the history of his country. There was in the city of Prague a collection of buildings known as "Venice," which was the resort of women who led a life of shame. Milič took upon himself the task of preaching to these women, to restore them, if possible, to a life of virtue. In this labor he was remarkably successful. But he soon saw that, if he would keep the women in the path of virtue, some means of sustenance must be provided. By private subscriptions he raised funds to secure several houses to serve as an asylum for these unfortunates. The place was called Jerusalem, and sometimes as many as three hundred women had a home there. Many benevolent ladies were induced to take girls from this institution into domestic service; but still the number remaining was so large that at times Milič was put to his wit's

end to know how to provide for them; and what made it all the harder for him was, that his motives were misjudged and willfully misrepresented.

This species of benevolence was entirely original with Milič; and when he died, the institution went into decay, since there was no one who appreciated its importance.

The popularity of Milič excited the jealousy and hatred of the priests to such a pitch that they drew up an accusation against him in twelve articles, and sent it to Pope Gregory XI, who was then at Avignon. The charges against him were so serious that the Pope became alarmed, and issued bulls, not only to the emperor, the Archbishop of Prague, and to the Bishop of Litomysl, but even to the Bishops of Olmutz, Breslau, and Cracow, warning them against the spread of such fearful heresies. Milič again repaired to Avignon to plead his own case, which he did so well that he was acquitted of all charges of heresy, and treated with marked distinction. Shortly after he was taken ill and died (1374).

One of the great services that Milič rendered his country was that he directed the mind of ^{Thomas of Stitný.} so great a man as Stitný into channels that led to so much beneficent literary activity.

When the University of Prague was founded, in 1348, Thomas was a young man, and he at once left his father's house to seek the advantages that the new school offered. The main subject studied in the higher institutions of learning was scholasticism, the best minds wasting their energies in empty philosophical discussions. Thomas Stitný, however, possessed a mind so clear, so deep, and penetrating, that he soon

saw the vanity and uselessness of such speculations. Since religion interested him above all other things, he now adopted it as a special theme of study; but his aims were practical, not speculative. He declared that it was his aim to bring the truth so vividly before the minds of his hearers that they might learn to shun evil and be inspired to follow the good. In direct opposition to the custom of those times, he wrote in Bohemian instead of Latin. He said that he did not wish to fence up Christian teaching by a Latin wall, but that his aim was to render it accessible to all the people. Stitný's style was so simple, so direct, and clear, that the people were as eager to read his books as they had before been to hear the preaching of Milič.

The learned men of the University of Prague rose up against Stitný. They declared that, by making knowledge accessible to the people, he but made it vulgar, lowering it to the comprehension of the illiterate masses. But he was not to be baffled from his purpose by any such sophistry. He replied: "St. Paul wrote his epistles to the Jews in Hebrew; to the Greeks, in Greek; why, then, should I, being a Bohemian, hesitate to write to my countrymen in Bohemian? I will write in Bohemian, for God loves a Bohemian as well as he does a Latinist."

Stitný's works consisted of twenty-six small pamphlets, treating mostly of religious and ethical subjects. They were diligently copied, circulated, and eagerly read, and exerted a lasting influence upon the development of the native tongue.

Another pupil of Milič was the distinguished preacher, Matthias of Janov. After studying in Prague,

Matthias went to Paris, where he remained six years, receiving the degree of Master of Arts. From this he was called Magister Parisiensis, by which title he is generally known in old writings.

In his younger days Matthias was very ambitious of honor, fame, and wealth. He even undertook a journey to Rome to petition the Pope for a canonry in Prague; and, later, succeeded in obtaining the position of confessor in St. Vitus Cathedral. Like Milič, he gave up all his honors, devoting his life to the preaching of the gospel. Matthias was very loyal to the Church; for, although his study of the Scriptures led him to doubt some of the accepted doctrines, he was ever ready to recant whenever he was asked to do so. The two ideas which seemed to have taken possession of his mind were the importance of the study of the Scripture, and that the Spirit of God would guide one to the knowledge of the truth. He made the Bible his daily companion, preferring it to the works of the fathers. He said that some people found comfort in the relics of saints, but that he cared nothing for such things, since when he had his Bible, he had his all in all. This, coming from a man standing so high, both in regard to learning and to sanctity of life, exerted a powerful influence; and, doubtless, it was due to his teaching that the Taborites afterwards made the study of the Bible an every-day duty, so that the common women knew more of its teachings than many a priest.

John Protiva was the first priest appointed to fill the pulpit of the Bethlehem Chapel, which afterwards became so famous on account of the preaching of Hus.

Protiva tried to reform the Church, but he soon came to the conclusion that nothing but complete reconstruction could save it from moral ruin. Most of the writings of Protiva are lost, but their tendency is learned from the reference made to them by other authors. They were the source from which Peter Čelcičký, the founder of the sect of the Moravian Brethren, drew most of his arguments.

One of the curious things in the life of this man was that, at the Council of Constance, he appeared as one of the witnesses against Hus.

From the above sketches it may be seen that when Hus appeared upon the scene as a popular preacher and reformer, he had the ground well prepared for his reception. Sigmund with truth could say to the prelates at Constance that the sect of which Hus was the leader and exponent was no new thing, but had originated when he (the emperor) was a mere youth.

KING VÁCLAV IV.

The Emperor Charles left three sons, the eldest of whom succeeded his father in the government as Václav IV. Sigmund, the second, received as his inheritance, Brandenburg; and John, parts of Lower and Upper Lusatia. Moravia was in the hands of Jost, a cousin of Václav. At the death of Charles's second brother, the County of Luxemburg fell again to the Bohemian crown.

Sigmund married Maria, the daughter of the King of Hungary, thus securing the crown of that country. This made him a powerful ruler, and, to a considerable extent, affected the interests of Bohemia.

King Václav in no respect equaled his illustrious

father. He not only lacked his ability to govern, but he was too indolent to make use of the talents that he did possess. All tasks that required persistent effort soon wearied him, and unlooked-for difficulties only roused his temper, which was so ungovernable as to lead him into many cruelties. Being passionately fond of hunting, he kept about him a large drove of hounds, one of these, a huge monster, sleeping in the king's chamber. It was believed that this hound caused the death of Queen Johanna, Václav's first wife. Václav also indulged in all manner of gross dissipations; such as drinking, gambling, and carousing about in the night. Yet he was no spendthrift; the crown treasury was in a good condition, and the taxes were reasonable. For this reason he was liked by the common people; and he, in turn, preferred their company to that of the nobility. As far as he dared, he gave the offices of the crown to the knights, zemans, and even to citizens, seeking their counsel rather than that of the classes above them. This partiality for the common people brought upon him the deadly hatred of the lords and prelates.

In the first fifteen years of his reign, the country enjoyed perfect peace and prosperity. The administration of laws was so excellent that it was said a person could carry pots of money upon his head without any fear of being robbed.

The last task that Charles attempted to accomplish, just before his death, was to settle the difficulty between the two rival Popes, Urban VI of Rome, and Clement VII of Avignon; and King Václav likewise tried to do this good work. For this reason several Diets were called; but the

The Great
Schism.

States were so divided in their allegiance to the Popes that nothing was accomplished. At these Diets, Václav also took the part of the cities that, at this time, were at war with the nobles, who tried to curtail their corporate privileges. But in this he also failed of accomplishing his purpose. The cities were defeated and deprived of many of their ancient rights. These failures so vexed Václav that he determined to throw up the imperial crown; but a reconciliation between him and the princes of Germany was effected at the Diet in Eger, where he also entered into negotiations concerning his second marriage. He married Sophia, the daughter of Duke John of Munich. She was a very accomplished and enlightened princess, and later proved a warm friend of the followers of Hus.

While King Václav was attending the Diet at Eger, a serious disturbance occurred in Prague. A priest carrying a eucharist was mocked by a Jew. Massacre of the Jews. This so enraged the populace that they rushed into the Jews' quarter, and massacred about three thousand of the inhabitants.

King Václav early began to manifest a dislike of the higher clergy on account of their pride and lordly assumptions. This hatred was provided Václav's Dislike to the Clergy. with abundant fuel by the actions of the Archbishop John of Jenstein, a man of sound morals, but a fanatic in regard to his theories of the worldly power of the Church. In his attempts to show his own authority, that prelate had many quarrels with the lower clergy and with the doctors of the university, and even with the king. On one occasion, one of the friends of Václav having been wronged by the archbishop, the king had that prelate arrested, keep-

ing him in confinement until the wronged man could obtain restitution from the archbishop's own estates. On another occasion two theological students, having been arrested and put to death by the orders of the king's chamberlain, although the king approved of the act, the archbishop, nevertheless, excommunicated the chamberlain.

King Václav had obtained, as a mark of special favor, the proclamation of the Year of Jubilee by Pope Boniface IX. He attached the greatest importance to this, intending to make it a time of great rejoicing in Prague. But all his plans were thwarted by the churly archbishop, who positively refused to do anything in preparation for that season of grace.

The ill-feeling between the king and the archbishop reached its climax in the quarrel about the Abbey of Kladrau. Václav had determined to establish another bishopric in Bohemia, intending to use for this purpose the Benedictine convent of Kladrau, and was only waiting till the abbot, who was quite old, should die. Here again his plans were thwarted by the archbishop. Learning of the death of the abbot, the archbishop, through his vicar-general, John of Nepomuk, immediately appointed a successor. When Václav heard of this, his rage knew no bounds, and he swore a fearful vengeance upon the proud priest. His courtiers, fearing that serious evils might result from such an open rupture with one of the dignitaries of the Church, did all in their power to quiet him, and finally he consented to have an interview with the offending prelate. But no sooner did Václav set his eyes upon his enemy than his wrath burst out afresh, and he ordered his immediate arrest,

together with his vicar-general and three other priests, canons of Prague. The archbishop saved himself by flight; but the three priests were taken to the city hall, where they were compelled to suffer for the misdeeds of their superior. Václav, determined to discover who was most to blame for this act, done in direct opposition to his expressed wishes, had the poor canons tortured, himself applying the burning candles to their flesh. Doubtless all four would have been put to death; but the king's wrath cooling somewhat, he bethought himself that the death of so many priests might bring him into trouble. He therefore released three of them; but John of Nepomuk was so horribly mutilated that he could not live, so he was ordered to be cast into the river Moldau (March 20, 1393).

The following centuries a host of legends were invented by the Jesuits about this John of Nepomuk, until they succeeded in having him canonized; and the poor, deluded people were taught to regard him as the chief saint of the country.

Several attempts at a reconciliation between the king and the archbishop were made, but they were unsuccessful, owing to the stubbornness of the king, who imposed too hard conditions. At last that prelate betook himself to Rome to plead his own case before the Pope. But in this emergency he was forsaken by his own chapter, and the Holy Father, seeing more gain from a friendship with Václav than with his unpopular archbishop, declined to give him any satisfaction. Disappointed in his hopes, the archbishop returned to Bohemia and resigned his office.

The displeasure of the nobility at being pushed aside and the offices of the kingdom given to the

lower classes, finally found expression in a conspiracy to deprive Václav of the government. The Revolt of the Nobles. conspiracy was headed by his brother Sigmund and cousin Jost of Moravia. King Václav was seized by the conspirators and held prisoner until he should promise that henceforth all offices of the crown were to be filled from the nobility, and that the king should not undertake anything of importance without their consent. As Václav refused to comply with their demands, they kept him prisoner, Jost being appointed by them regent.

In the meantime, Václav's brother John came into the country, raised an army, and prepared to make war upon the rebellious nobles. The case of Václav was not so very desperate, since all the common people were upon his side, and the burggraves of all the citadels had remained loyal to him. Prince John easily obtained possession of Prague; but the nobles fled, taking with them the king. The war was kept up for some time, until they were compelled to restore Václav to the government. Peace, however, did not last long. Prince John dying shortly after, the lords again took up arms against their king, and this time he was compelled to give them a share in the government. Indeed, for a while they had entire control of the government, and showed the king their independence of him by putting to death four of his favorite courtiers.

These domestic disturbances greatly diminished the respect for Václav abroad. The princes of the Václav loses the Imperial Crown. empire complained that he neglected the interests of Germany, and appointed a meeting, where they discussed the advisability of deposing

him. This action roused the king from his lethargy. He called an Imperial Diet, where, besides other business, it was decided to end the schism in the Church by asking both Popes to abdicate and electing a new Pope in their place. But no sooner was this decision made known to the Roman Pope Boniface, than that pontiff began in turn to fight the interests of Václav, and it was due to his influence that he was deposed from the imperial dignity, and Ruprecht Palatine elected in his place as King of the Romans.

About this time the same misfortune befell Sigmund in Hungary that, through his aid, had befallen his brother in Prague—he was taken prisoner by his own lords, and kept in close confinement. Václav, however, showed himself far more brotherly than Sigmund had done. He raised an army, and, in five months, the lords were compelled to set their king at liberty.

King Václav, counting upon the gratitude of his brother for the services he had rendered him, determined to ask his aid in freeing himself from the detested yoke of the nobles. For this purpose he invited him to Prague and gave him a share in the government. Sigmund repaid this confidence with the blackest treachery. He seized Václav, cast him into prison, and himself usurped the government. Later, he appointed a regent and went to Vienna, taking with him his royal prisoner. But he had scarcely left the country when an insurrection broke out against him, and he hurried back to restore order. His cruel treatment of the citizens of some of the rebellious cities struck terror into the hearts of the people, and they submitted to his government without

much further resistance. He remained in the country for some time, extorting money by all manner of illegal methods, until an insurrection in his own kingdom compelled him to leave the country.

After some months of imprisonment, Václav succeeded in making his escape, and returned to Bohemia. He was hailed as a deliverer, and many of the lords, who had formerly been his enemies, gladly took up arms to help to reinstate him in the government. The adherents of Sigmund were driven out of the country, and Václav, reorganizing the government after his own heart, began to rule with considerable energy.

The rest of the reign of King Václav is mostly taken with the attempts to settle the difficulty between the rival Popes, and the troubles at home that arose out of the abuses in the Church. These will be related in the chapter on John Hus.

JOHN HUS.

There is no name in the history of Bohemia that, even at the present time, rouses on the one hand so much admiration and enthusiasm, and on the other so much hatred and fanaticism, as that of John Hus, the martyr of Constance. Hus, without question, is one of the most illustrious characters in history. In his perception of religious truth, he was as far in advance of the clergy of his day as the enlightened men of the present day are ahead of those of the fifteenth century. Yet he does not commend himself to our notice so much on account of his intellectual ability, but rather on account of his life-work as a reformer.

As has been related, there were several men before the time of Hus who had raised their voices against



JOHN HUS.

the crying abuses in the Church; but their labors afforded only a temporary relief. The abuses remained, and, indeed, seemed to increase rather than diminish. This was due, to some extent, to the dual Papacy. The Pope at Avignon attempted to hold a court equal in splendor to that of his rival at Rome; and as enormous sums of money were needed for this purpose, he

resorted to new and unheard-of methods for extorting it from the people. He asked more and more for confirmation to a bishopric, and usurped the right to make appointments that had formerly been exercised by the local authorities. Finally, benefices were sold to the highest bidder, or given away for services done to his Holiness. Boniface of Rome started the practice of giving away benefices, even before they were vacated. His example was followed by the bishops, until simony became the general custom, and the Church was full of men totally unfit for a clerical profession.

Another great evil in the Church was the enormous number of endowments. The idea of vicarious devotion had become so general that the court, the nobility, and even the wealthy citizens, had their family chapel or altar in some church where a special priest was appointed to serve mass and say prayers for the souls of his patrons. The number of clerics thus officiating increased to such an extent that one church in Prague had three hundred priests connected with it. The common parish churches usually had from ten to twenty. Most of these were supported by the endowments; besides this, they obtained considerable money upon various pretexts, and so were able to live in luxury and ease.

The high-handed treatment that Archbishop Jenstein received at the hands of King Václav, and the immunity of the latter from punishment, did much to weaken the power of the clergy in Bohemia. Jenstein's successor, Archbishop Olbram, was so subservient to the wishes of the king that nothing is heard of him for the whole time he was in office. These facts explain why it was that the preachers who denounced

so bitterly the corruption of the Church and advanced various new doctrines, met with little or no oppositon.

After the death of Archbishop Olbram, the chapter elected Zbynek of Hazenburg as his successor. Zbynek had little knowledge and less learning, and owed his preferment to a successful military expedition intrusted to him by the king. It was said that he began to learn the alphabet after his elevation to the bishopric. Yet he possessed business-like habits, and manifested considerable good-will to work a reform in the Church.

At this time there was no man so popular in Prague as Hus. He was dean of the Faculty of Philosophy, later rector of the university, the confessor of the queen, and preacher of Bethlehem Chapel. Archbishop Zbynek looked upon him with much favor, intrusting him with various important duties. This friendship might have continued much longer than it did, but for the excessive zeal of some of the followers of Hus. The first serious trouble arose in regard to the teachings of Wycliffe, the English reformer. Owing to the marriage of Princess Anna of Bohemia to Richard II of England, there had been much intercourse between the two countries, and thus it was that the writings of that great man were introduced into Bohemia. They were eagerly read, and discussed with so much interest, that the matter was brought before the university. Forty-five of the Articles were condemned as heretical, and orders were issued that no one was to teach or maintain them either in public or private.

But public opinion had progressed too far for any such order to be obeyed. Even before the Articles were condemned, several learned men, among them Hus, declared that the said Articles were so separated

from their context as to have an entirely different meaning from what was meant by the author, and that such adulteration of books was worthy of the most severe punishment. Hus's defense of Wycliffe's Articles brought a rupture between him and the archbishop. The enemies of Hus sent reports to Rome that heretical doctrines were disseminated in Bohemia, and that not only Hus, but the king and the archbishop, favored them. Gregory XII sent orders to the archbishop that all such heresies should be immediately extirpated. After much consultation and many discussions of the matter, the archbishop requested that all the books of Wycliffe should be brought to him for examination, that he might be able to point out what parts were heretical. It shows the influence of ages of superstition upon the human mind, that the learned doctors of the university, among them Hus, complied with this request. They probably imagined that, by virtue of his sacred office, the illiterate prelate was endowed with some mysterious power of discrimination, and so could judge of the substance of works that he could scarcely read.

The shrewd prelate would not expose his ignorance by pointing out errors, so he devised a more ingenious plan. He persuaded the Synod that was to assist him in the examination, to condemn all of Wycliffe's works as heretical, and ordered them to be destroyed by fire; and, lest the action should be opposed, all preaching in the chapels was to be immediately stopped; this order being aimed especially against Hus.

The university entered a protest against this decision, declaring that the archbishop had no right to destroy books that were the property of its members,

who had the privilege of examining all kinds of doctrine. They said, if this principle should be adopted, it would be necessary to destroy the works of most of the pagan philosophers. King Václav supported the university, and requested the archbishop to suspend his intended action until the matter could be laid before the newly-elected Pope, John XXIII. But he heeded not the words of the king, and had the books burned without any delay. The books were beautifully written and richly bound, and their destruction was a serious loss to the owners; therefore, King Václav ordered the archbishop to make good the loss; and upon his refusal to do so, his estates were sequestered.

An event of grave importance, far-reaching in its results, was the action of the king in regard to the university. When Charles IV established the University of Prague, he aimed to make it the great institution of learning for the whole empire. It was with this end in view that he divided it into four nations—the Bohemian and Polish representing the Slavonic population, and the Bavarian and Saxon, the Teutonic. The founding of the University of Cracow, in 1400, drew away most of the Polish students, so that the Polish nation was virtually represented by the German, which gave that nation the whole control of the elections. The significance of this came out in connection with the Council of Pisa.

The German
Exodus
from the
University.

The European rulers failing in their attempts to settle the difficulty between the rival Popes, determined to call a great Council, to meet at Pisa, whose purpose should be the election of a new Pope, and reform of the Church in head and members. The reform party hailed the news with joy, but the higher clergy,

who reaped much benefit out of the existing disorders, became alarmed, and did all in their power to bring the proposed Council into discredit. When King Václav expressed his desire that the nation should for the time being remain neutral in regard to the two Popes, he met with much opposition, even from the archbishop. He therefore appealed to the university; but this was divided into two parties—the Bohemian, in the minority, approving of the king's decision, and the German, opposing him. Hus and his friends grasped the opportunity to free themselves of the foreign yoke. They proposed a change in the constitution of the university; viz., that the natives should have three votes and the foreigners but one. At first, King Václav looked upon this innovation with displeasure, and severely reprimanded Hus for constantly causing disturbances; but being convinced of the justness of the request, he issued the following proclamation:

“Although it is necessary to love all men, yet charity ought to be regulated by the degrees of proximity. Therefore, considering that the German nation, which does not belong to this country, has, as we have learned, appropriated to itself, in all the acts of the University of Prague, three votes, whilst the Bohemian nation, the legitimate heir of this realm, has but one; and considering that it is very unjust that foreigners should enjoy the privileges of the natives to the prejudice of the latter, we order, by the present act, under the penalty of our displeasure, that the Bohemian nation should, without any delay or contradiction, enjoy henceforth the privilege of three votes in all councils, judgments, and elections, and all other academic acts and dispositions, in the same manner as

is practiced in the Universities of Paris, Lombardy and Italy."

The German professors and students met the proclamation with great indignation, and entered into a solemn agreement rather to emigrate from Prague than submit to so infamous a regulation. They made strenuous exertions to secure a revocation of the order; but King Václav remained inexorable.

The Germans then prepared to put the threat into execution. To make their departure more imposing, it was agreed that they should all start upon the same day. In the summer of 1409, a strange sight met the eyes of the country people. The highways leading to Prague were filled with motley crowds of angry Germans; professors, students, and attendants were moving away in all manner of vehicles that could be impressed into service for the occasion. Some authorities say that 20,000 men left Prague that day; but Tomek puts the number down to 5,000. But whether the number was 20,000 or 5,000, their departure was a grievous loss to the city. Sigmund, writing to the Council of Constance, in 1416, deplored this loss in the following words: "That splendid University of Prague was counted among the rarest jewels of our realm; for of all the universities of the German nation, it bore, not undeservedly, the name of being the greatest. Into it flowed, from all parts of Germany, youths and men of mature years, alike through love of virtue and study, who, seeking the treasures of knowledge and philosophy, found them there in abundance." All this at once ceased. The university became small in numbers, and still smaller in influence; and both the city and the country were great losers thereby.

As might be expected, this misfortune was laid at the door of Hus and his friends. Probably the worst feature of this was the bad reputation that Bohemia gained throughout the empire by the evil reports spread by the German professors and students. To this was due, doubtless, the malicious hatred that manifested itself on the part of the Germans against the Bohemians during the long wars that followed.

Indulgences. Another matter that brought Hus into ill repute among the clergy was his opposition to the sale of indulgences.

In 1411, Pope John XXIII declared a crusade against Ladislav, King of Naples, charging him with heresy. He promised plenary indulgences to all who should either take part in person or aid it with funds. In Bohemia, the sale of these indulgences was intrusted to Tiem, the Dean of Passau, who obtained permission for this both from the king and the archbishop; but only under certain conditions. He, however, did not keep the conditions, but sold the documents to various priests, allowing them to make what they could in retailing them. As this traffic was held in no good repute in Bohemia, it was taken up by priests that were notorious for their grossly immoral lives, and carried on in a most scandalous manner.

Hus denounced the traffic, warning the people not to squander their money for these worthless promises. The matter was brought before a Synod of the university, and it decided that, since this came from the Pope, Christians were bound to treat it with reverence, even if they could not agree with it.

Hus made a declaration that showed that he was

no longer in spiritual bondage to the Pope. He said : " I term the doctrines of Christ's apostles apostolic commands, and, in so far as the commands of the Pope of Rome agree with those doctrines, I am willing to obey them ; but when I see the contrary, I shall not obey, even if ye place fire before me to consume my body." Hus not only continued to exhort the people against the indulgences, but he sent letters to various parts of Bohemia, Moravia, Poland, and even to Hungary, warning the people against this traffic. This diminished the sale of the indulgences, and, moreover, helped to cultivate a spirit of resistance to all ecclesiastical authority.

To quiet the disturbances that were constantly arising, a Synod was held in Bohemian Brod. At this Synod, Master Jacobek stated that the real point at issue was whether human ordinances, proceeding from a hierarchy composed of mortal, and consequently fallible beings, were to be obeyed in preference to the commands of God.

This Synod accomplished nothing, and, the disturbances in the capital constantly increasing, King Václav requested Hus to leave the city for a while. This, however, only helped to spread the new doctrine. Such immense crowds flocked to hear the preaching of Hus, that he was obliged to address the people in the open air. Besides this, he had time to write various articles, which, being in the mother tongue, were eagerly sought and read by the common people.

While these things were going on in Bohemia, Sigmund had been elected King of the Romans, and while on an expedition to Italy to aid the Pope against Ladislav, he persuaded that pontiff to call a General Coun-

cil, which was to meet in Constance, in 1413. Sigmund therefore sent an invitation to Hus to appear before the Council and defend his cause, promising him his imperial safe-conduct, so that he might come and go with perfect safety. Hus was not only willing; but eager, to obey the summons, and immediately repaired to Prague to prepare for the journey. He presented himself for examination before the papal inquisitor, who, hearing his case in the presence of several nobles and prelates, declared him free from every suspicion of heresy, and gave him a written statement to that effect. Moved by this example, the archbishop gave him a similar testimonial.

Hus started on his journey for Constance, October 11, 1414. Before leaving his native land he exhorted the people to be steadfast in maintaining God's truth, and to pray for him that he might have grace and wisdom for the coming ordeal. King Václav gave Hus an escort of three noblemen—Sir Václav of Duba, Knight John of Chlum, and Sir Henry of Chlum. The imperial safe-conduct was secured before the party reached Constance.

Although Hus had been warned while still in Prague that, once in the power of the angry prelates, he would never return to Bohemia, he had so much confidence in the justness of his cause that he had no fear; and he was reassured in this by the kind reception given him by the Pope. He soon found that this confidence was entirely misplaced. Without any explanation, he was seized and cast into prison. Sir Chlum at once went to the Council, and said to the Pope in the presence of the cardinals: "Holy father, this is not the promise made by your Holiness to me

and my uncle. I brought Master Hus here under the safe-conduct of my lord, the King of the Romans, and your Holiness said that had Hus killed your own brother, he should be safe here, and you would neither let nor hinder him; and lo! here he is arrested while under the protection of the aforesaid safe-conduct."

The Pope replied little to this, but, taking Sir Chlum aside, he said to him: "You know on what a footing my own affairs are here with the cardinals. They delivered Hus into my hands, and I was obliged to receive him into captivity." This declaration was probably true, for this Pope was soon after deposed and imprisoned by the Council.

At first Hus was kept in a house where one of the cardinals lodged; but, for greater security, he was removed to a Dominican convent on the shores of Lake Constance, and thrust into a cell three feet wide and seven feet long.

Lord Chlum strained every energy to secure his release, but all in vain. He hoped that as soon as Sigmund arrived he would compel the cardinals to respect the safe-conduct, but in this he was bitterly disappointed. The wily priests soon convinced the emperor that it was not binding upon him to keep faith with a heretic.

The trial of Hus lasted for several days. There was much discussion about all sorts of questions that were of no importance. All manner of absurd charges were brought against him, and sustained by false-hearted priests, who hated him because he had spoken against their depraved lives. But the gist of the whole matter was, that he denied the authority of the Pope and the cardinals, and insisted on referring all to Scripture

and reason. He was ever ready to be instructed, but he asked for real instruction, an intelligent explanation sustained by Scripture text, and not the mere dictum of the Council. What especially offended the members of the Council was his persistent denial that the Pope and the cardinals constituted the Church, he claiming that the Church was the whole body of people of all ages and nations destined for salvation. As for the infallibility of the Pope, Hus used the flight and subsequent deposition of John XXIII as a striking refutation of this doctrine. The doctrines advanced by Hus were of so radical a nature that, once admitted, the power of the Church would have been forever undermined. Besides this, he had injured the Church in other ways. By his open denunciation of the greed and gross immorality of the priests he had weakened discipline; by his open denial of absolute authority he had awakened the spirit of resistance; and by his war against the sale of indulgences he had not only diminished the income of the Church, but had brought these methods of raising funds into disrepute. The clergy, therefore, had abundant cause for hating him, and the Council would have condemned him to death without any mercy, but that, for reasons of policy, they feared to do so. A remonstrance had come from Bohemia, to which were attached the seals of two hundred and fifty noblemen, and even Poland sent messengers asking for fair treatment of so illustrious a prisoner. The Council, therefore, honestly tried to save Hus's life, if it could be done without compromising their own infallibility. The most eloquent prelates were sent to him to induce him to submit to the Council and recant his doctrines. His own friends implored him with

tears in their eyes, if it were possible, that he should accept the instruction of the Church. His final answer was as follows:

"The bishops bid me acknowledge before you my errors. If this were possible, merely by the loss of honor of a mortal man, they would perhaps have persuaded me to do so. But I stand here before the face of Almighty God, and I can not do it without dishonor to Him, and the reproaches of my own conscience; because I feel convinced that I have never taught those things of which I am accused; but that I have at all times believed, written, and taught the contrary of it. How could I lift my eyes to heaven, how could I show my face to those whom I have taught—whose number is very great—if I were to unsettle their minds about those things, of which at present they have no doubt? Dare I by my example cast doubt into so many souls and consciences instructed by the words of Holy Writ and edified by the pure doctrine of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ? No! I shall never let it appear that I have more regard for this mortal body than for the eternal salvation of those souls."

As Hus could not be induced to recant, he was condemned to be burned at the stake. The day fixed for the execution of the sentence was July 6, 1415. Weak and emaciated from illness and persecution, he was taken from his filthy dungeon and led to the place of execution, which was some distance out of the city. He was divested of his garments, tied to the stake; a high paper-cap, decorated with pictures of devils was placed upon his head, and the bishop ordered the torch to be applied to the fuel piled up about him, while he commended his body to the flames and his soul to the

devil, to which the condemned man replied: "And I commend my soul to the Lord Jesus Christ."

As the wood had been piled up to his chin, the smoke soon suffocated him, so that his agony did not last any longer than it would take to repeat two or three pater-nosters. His clothes were also thrown into the flames; and when everything was consumed, the ashes were carefully collected and cast into the Rhine, this precaution being taken lest they should be taken by his friends and carried home as sacred relics.

Thus perished one of Bohemia's greatest sons, a man with a character so pure that even his bitterest enemies could bring no charges against him. He fell a victim to the fanatical rage of his enemies, and the treachery of Sigmund, who advised the cardinals not to spare his life, even though he should recant.

The sorrowing friends of Hus returned to Bohemia bearing the woeful tidings. The country was plunged into the most profound grief. Hus had been beloved as a preacher before; but now he became enshrined in the hearts of his countrymen as a martyr and a saint. The words, uttered by the voice forever hushed, became doubly precious. His writings were studied with utmost zeal, and as they were followed out, Bohemia was soon on the high-road to Protestantism. And yet Hus was no Protestant, but died as a good Catholic. He defended himself against the imputation of doubting the doctrine of substantiation; he believed in the mass; and it is known that, before his execution, a monk came to his cell, heard his confession, and granted him absolution. That his doctrines would ultimately have led him to Protestantism, can be proved by the following illustration. While at Constance, his followers in

Bohemia began to administer the communion in both kinds, bread and wine; but not feeling sure of their ground, they wrote to Hus, asking his opinion upon the subject. Hus immediately turned to the New Testament, and, finding that such was the practice in the primitive Church, he decided that this was according to Scripture, and hence correct, totally ignoring the decisions of the Councils and the reasons given by the Church for withholding the cup from the laity. After this decision, the chalice became the symbol of the followers of Hus; consequently they went by the name of Calixtines.

The story of Hus would be incomplete without some account of his friend and fellow-martyr, Jerome of Prague. Hearing of the danger to which Hus was exposed, Jerome hastened to Con-^{Jerome of Prague.} stance to lend him such assistance as he was able; but on the way, being warned that he could do no good, but might lose his own life, he turned back. It was, however, too late. He was arrested, brought back to Constance, and, at the instigation of the treacherous Sigmund, brought before the Council for trial. He defended his case with so much learning and eloquence that some of the more enlightened cardinals declared that his eloquence equaled the best that could be found in the Greek and Roman masters. When threatened by death, in a moment of weakness, Jerome promised to recant; but when he appeared at the Council, what was the amazement of the assembled prelates, when, instead of a recantation, he pronounced a glowing eulogium upon Hus. This settled his fate. He was burned May 30, 1416, upon the same spot where Hus had suffered.

A short distance out of the city of Constance there is a walk shaded with trees, leading into an open field. At the end of this walk there is an iron fence inclosing a huge boulder overgrown with ivy and periwinkle. This marks the spot where John Hus and Jerome of Prague gave up their lives for their convictions.

CHAPTER V.

FROM THE HUSSITE WARS TO THE REIGN OF SIGMUND.

THE HUSSITE WARS.

THE universal consternation into which the nation was plunged at the news of the death of Hus soon gave place to expressions of indignation and defiance. At first the wrath of the people was turned against his enemies near at hand—the priests unfriendly to his teachings. The enraged people drove them out of their churches, and, in some cases, out of the city, and filled their places with priests of their own choice.

These acts of violence were not restricted to the common people, but were indulged in by the nobility as well. The Bishop of Lytomysl, who had been the chief informant against Hus, was deprived of his church, and his estates divided among the neighboring noblemen.

The Council had sent the bishop as a legate to Bohemia, but the feeling against him was so bitter that he did not dare make his appearance. Not only the nobility, but also the king and queen, were greatly grieved at the death of Hus, for he was much beloved by them; and, besides, his execution was a slight to the Bohemian crown, the Council having no legal right to condemn him to death.

A few weeks after the death of Hus, there was a meeting called composed of delegates from Bohemia

and Moravia, and a memorial was drawn up protesting against the action of the Council, and charging the prelates with gross injustice and hatred toward the Bohemian nation. There was also an agreement entered upon, to which were attached four hundred and fifty-two seals of lords and yeomen, by which they bound themselves to protect the free preaching of the word of God, not heeding the orders of any Council, but being governed by their own bishops and the Pope that should be elected. They further agreed that all matters of faith should be referred to the masters of their university. A small number of lords and knights formed a counter union, agreeing to abide by the decisions of the Church and the Council of Constance.

The news of these proceedings, instead of causing the Council to pause in its decisions, only drove it to acts of greater severity. An order was sent to Bohemia commanding the four hundred and fifty-two lords and yeomen to appear before the Council to be tried for heresy. This order also included in the list of the proscribed Jacobek and many of his associates, all of whom had been instrumental in introducing communion in both kinds in their Churches. It is needless to say that this order of the Council was not obeyed.

The Council proceeded in its severe measures. The University of Prague was deprived of its rights and privileges until such time as the Church should see fit to restore them. Great displeasure was also expressed at the lukewarmness that the Bishop of Olmutz and the Archbishop of Prague showed in suppressing heresy. When the Bishop of Olmutz died shortly after, his place was filled by John Zelezny, in direct opposition to the wishes of King Václav and Queen Sophia.

Indeed, the Council would have proceeded even against the king and queen had not Sigmund interfered.

These severe measures had no other effect than that the archbishop suspended the granting of degrees in the university, and also pronounced an interdict upon the city of Prague. This, however, was not heeded anywhere except in the St. Vitus Church on the Hradschin. The masters in the university, heedless of the orders of the Council, continued in their teaching, and from time to time gave their opinion upon questions of faith, the most important of these being that, according to Scripture, both bread and wine were necessary in administering the sacrament of the Lord's Supper (1417).

The university declared Hus a holy martyr for the faith of Christ, and ordered that the 6th of July, the day of his death, be kept as a national holiday.

On the estates of the noblemen, the priests that refused to give communion in both kinds were driven away, and others called to fill their places.

Meanwhile, innovations of a more serious nature arose among the people of Austi, in the southern part of Bohemia, the scene of Hus's labors at the time when he was exiled from Prague. Hus had instilled into the minds of the people the principle of referring everything to the authority of the Scripture, and they not only followed this principle to its ultimate results, but declared injurious all religious teaching not found in the Bible. They, therefore, abolished the great mass of ceremonial that renders the service in the Catholic Church so imposing. They would have no adoration of the eucharist, no mass, and no auricular confession; if a person was guilty of some crime, he must confess

it openly before the whole Church. There were to be no sacraments except baptism and the Lord's Supper. In baptism, there were to be no sponsors, the priest performing the ceremony without any promise on the part of the parents. As they could find no proof in the Bible for the existence of purgatory, there were no prayers for the dead. They went to the farthest extremity with the Lord's Supper, bread and wine being administered daily to both adults and children.

The people holding these views were afterwards known as the Taborites, while the more moderate reformers were called Utraquists or Calixtines.

While these parties or sects were developing their doctrines in Bohemia, the Council of Constance finally succeeded in securing unity in the Church by the election of a new Pope. John XXIII, having been tried for his crimes and misdemeanors, and found guilty, was deposed; Gregory XII, fearing defeat, resigned of his own accord; Benedict XII gave up his honors when Spain, his last support, entering into a treaty with Sigmund, deserted him. Thus the Council was at length enabled to remedy the monstrosity in the Church by providing it with a single head instead of three; but in the other objects for which it had assembled—to reform the Church in “head and members”—it was not so successful.

Indeed, the longer the Council was in session, the more loath were the prelates to interfere in the existing state of affairs; and the extremes to which the reform party went in Bohemia were used as a warning to let well enough alone. As soon as the new Pope, Martin V, was elected (1418), he dissolved the Assembly, promising to call another in five years in Pavia.

Pope Martin approved of all the measures that the Council had passed against Bohemia. He sent orders to the Archbishop of Prague that the exiled priests be recalled and reinstated in their churches, and that the old order be immediately restored. King Václav was to bind himself with a solemn oath to keep the rules and regulations of the one true Roman Church, without any deviation whatever ; should he refuse, he was to be compelled to obey by a crusade against him of all the princes of Christendom.

Thus the Bohemian nation found itself in a predicament wherein it had not been since its adoption of Christianity. The people were divided into two parties, both claiming to seek the good of the nation, but in ways that tended to the destruction of what was most sacred to each other. A large majority of the clergy and laity had adopted new views that could not be laid aside without doing violence both to conscience and character. Freely had the Bohemian nation assumed the yoke of Rome, and the question now arose whether they could as freely lay it aside when its retention seemed inconsistent with their spiritual welfare. It seemed to the people that the Pope had arrogated many powers that the Church did not originally possess ; among these was the right of capital punishment, especially in the case of heretics.

Pope Martin and his party, on the other hand, claimed that the papal power was above all nations and kings, and that any one refusing it obedience was to be compelled to submit by the rest of Christendom.

King Václav found himself in a most critical situation. Either he must submit to the Pope, thus violating his own convictions and going against his own na-

tion, or he may side with his nation, and thus run the risk of incurring the wrath of the Pope and involving his country in a war with all Christendom. His sympathies were with the nation, and in this he was sustained by his whole court, and especially by Queen Sophia. Václav hesitated, gave vague replies only to gain time; but when his brother Sigmund showed him the disasters that must follow disobedience, he finally agreed to suppress the innovations, and gave orders that the priests be reinstated in their dioceses (1419).

The king's order was obeyed in the Churches that were immediately under his jurisdiction; but upon the estates of the noblemen, the Utraquist priests continued to hold the churches. In the city of Prague, the people expressed so much dissatisfaction that the king was obliged to assign them three churches where communion was administered in both kinds.

THE BEGINNING OF THE TABORITES.

Many of the old priests being restored to their churches, the people that had adopted the new views found themselves shut out from such church service as they desired. They, therefore, met for worship in the open fields and forests. Some places, on account of their favorable location, became fixed into permanent camping-grounds, to which the people gave Biblical names, such as Mount Horeb and Mount Tabor; it was from the latter that they received the name of Taborites. Their example was followed by the people of Prague, when the three churches assigned for their use proved too small to accommodate the large congregations. In going to their place of worship, the people generally marched in processions, bearing banners and

singing hymns. The leader in these public demonstrations was a certain monk named John Zelivsky, a man of great eloquence and wondrous personal magnetism. He was supported in his work by Nicholas of Hussinetz, a former courtier of King Václav.

One day Nicholas, at the head of an immense congregation of people, met the king, and laid before him a petition that more churches be assigned to the Calixtines, since many of them had no place to worship. The king, instead of granting the petition, became angry, and ordered Nicholas to leave the city. As these public demonstrations mostly originated in New Town, where the monk Zelivsky was the preacher in the Church of Mary of the Snow, Václav thought he could prevent their recurrence by changing the officers of that town. He therefore dismissed the aldermen, appointing new ones in their places, with strict injunctions that all such public disturbances should be forbidden.

Nicholas, exiled from Prague, betook himself to the District of Bechyn, and began to take part in the gatherings upon the mountains. He early perceived that if the people would maintain their worship, they would, sooner or later, be compelled to resort to arms; and therefore he sought to come to some understanding upon this point with some of the more thoughtful of the Taborites. With this end in view, a grand meeting was appointed to be held on Mount Tabor, on St. Magdalen's day (July 22, 1419). Grand Camp-meeting.

The proposed meeting, having been announced at all the local meetings, both in Moravia and Bohemia, on the appointed day there gathered together a vast

concourse of people, amounting to some forty-two thousand. This grand meeting was, in fact, a national and religious celebration, and the people manifested so much enthusiasm, patriotism, and zeal for the cause of truth as to move the hearts of even the bitterest enemies of the chalice. As the pilgrims came to the meeting in processions, with flying banners, they were met and welcomed by those who had arrived earlier, and escorted to the place assigned to them upon the camping ground. All distinctions of rank were forgotten, lords, knights, priests, and peasants mingling freely together. All were brethren, and had all things in common, so that the poor, who had brought but little, fared as well as those that had brought much. The day was spent in preaching, exhortations, taking the communion, and in brotherly discussions about the dangers that threatened their country, and the best means of preparing to meet them. The leaders, however, held secret meetings, where they looked the threatening storm in the face, and discussed the necessity of taking up arms in self-defense. The two men that possessed the greatest influence among the reform party were Nicholas of Hussinetz and John Žižka of Trocnov. Both were men of broad views and much experience, and they early came to the conclusion that it was necessary to prepare the people to defend their rights by taking up arms; but at this time, this subject was broached only to a small number of the most experienced leaders. A message was sent to King Václav that all those present were ready to lay down their lives for the chalice. As might be expected, the purpose of this great meeting was variously explained. A report went forth that Nicholas was planning to

usurp the crown of Bohemia, which caused King Václav not a little alarm.

The storm that the leaders of the Taborites thought inevitable burst forth in Prague itself. July 30th, a few days after the meeting upon Mount Tabor, when John Zelivsky, as usual, was leading a large procession to St. Stephen's Church, he found the doors closed upon them. The angry populace broke open the church, and then went to the New Town City Hall, demanding to know the cause of this, and also asking the authorities to release immediately some persons who were imprisoned there on account of their religious views. As this was refused, the people became so angry that but a single spark was needed to kindle the smoldering fury into flame. Unfortunately, this spark was provided by some thoughtless person in the hall. As John Zelivsky was standing at the head of the procession, holding aloft the eucharist, a window was opened in the hall, and a stone thrown upon him. The infuriated people now rushed upon the hall, forced the doors, seized whom they could, hurling them out of the windows, where they were murdered with such weapons as could be found at the moment. Three aldermen and several other officers thus lost their lives.

The leader in this attack was John Žižka, who afterwards became the great general of the Hussite armies. Žižka, like Nicholas, had been one of the favorites of King Václav, and at this time he was still in his service. In regard to social class, he belonged to the zemans, or smaller land-owners. He had but one eye, having lost the other by an accident.

When the news of these acts of violence reached the king in his summer residence at Kunratic castle,

he was thrown into such a paroxysm of rage that he was seized with a slight stroke of apoplexy. As soon as he recovered, he threatened a terrible vengeance upon the offenders, and declared that he would exterminate heresy from the land root and branch.

But upon his return to Prague he found the people of New Town well armed ; he therefore made an ostensible peace, biding his time, when his brother Sigmund should come to Prague. Shortly after, he was seized with another fit of apoplexy, from which he died, August 16, 1419.

QUEEN SOPHIA AND ČENEK OF WARTENBERG.

As soon as the report of the death of King Václav spread through Prague, the people lost all fear, and turned against the churches and monasteries unfriendly to the chalice. The priests and monks were driven away, the furniture smashed, and many beautiful pictures forever ruined. Finally the enraged mob went out of the city, and attacked the Cartusian monastery, setting it afire, and scattering the monks in all directions. This example of violence was followed in Pilsen, Pisek, Königgratz, and several other towns, the people destroying the convents of begging friars. With the monks, the German people also suffered, since they were almost without an exception enemies of the new teaching.

The more thoughtful of the population did not approve of these unlawful proceedings, and, as soon as possible, restored order and obedience to law in the city ; but they knew that, to secure permanent peace, the presence of the ruler was indispensable. The State Diet met in Prague, and drew up a memorial to

Sigmund, as heir of the Bohemian throne, to come as soon as possible to take possession of the government; but a clause was added asking him to leave the estates the freedom of the Word of God and communion in both kinds, and to exert himself to induce the Pope to revoke the severe edicts against the nation.

When the memorial reached Sigmund he was just on the eve of a campaign against the Turks. Some of his counselors advised him to go first to Turkey, to subdue his Eastern enemies, and then to Bohemia, to take possession of his throne. As this advice was in harmony with his own inclinations, he gave the vice-royalty to Queen Sophia, appointing as her chief counselor Čenek of Wartenberg, one of the chief lords of the realm. As both Queen Sophia and Čenek favored the Utraquists, Sigmund thought they could keep the country in peace. As to the clause about guaranteeing the freedom of preaching, to this Sigmund gave an ambiguous reply, which the moderate party interpreted favorably, but which was regarded with suspicion by the Taborites, who, remembering his treachery to Hus, placed no faith in his promises. They began to prepare for an armed defense of their liberties. To become united in their efforts, camp-meetings were held upon the mountains, and finally one was appointed to be held in Prague, November 10th. As the people were to come from a great distance, orders were given that they should arm themselves for their own safety during the journey. As this seemed like an attempt to gain possession of the city, Queen Sophia prepared to defend the city, collecting a small force and garrisoning the citadel on the Small Side. The people of the New Town took possession of the fortress of Vyšehrad,

driving out the garrison that had been put there by King Václav.

The first blood shed in the Hussite wars was caused by the Royalists, when the people were on their way to the meeting appointed for the 10th of November. The Royalists, fearing that so many armed people coming to the capital might cause disturbances, sent an armed force into the country to prevent them from assembling. In many places they were successful, but in the districts of Pilsen, Klatov, and Domazlitz (Taus), the preparations had been made in secret, so that a large company of people were gathered together on the 1st of November, and began their march toward Prague, their number increasing as they advanced on their way.

When they reached Knin, they were met by couriers begging them to send assistance to a party of pilgrims from Austi on the Lusitz, who were prevented from proceeding on their journey by a Royalist army, consisting of about 1,300 cavalry, under the command of Sir Peter of Sternberg, then the president of the mines at Kuttenberg. Assistance was immediately sent; but ere they reached their friends, the latter had been attacked and defeated, but few escaping with their lives. As soon as the new party came in sight, Sir Sternberg ordered them to surrender, lest the same fate befall them as the Austians; but before he could put his threat into execution, he saw a much larger force coming from Knin, and, concluding that prudence was the better part of valor, he retired from the field.

The people remained all night upon the hill whose soil had drunk the blood of the first martyrs to their cause. The next day a solemn mass was said, and the dead were buried amidst the deepest expressions of

grief, brotherly love, and reverence. This sad duty being performed, they resumed their march, and reached Prague without any further molestation.

It is seen that the guilt of the first bloodshed in the Hussite war was with the Royalists, which proved a great advantage to the popular party, since they could do no less than take up arms in self-defense. It seems that this very question had been provided for some months previous by the leaders, John Žižka and Nicholas of Hussinetz. They had laid before the doctors of the university the question, asking for a formal decision, whether it was right and proper to take up arms in defense of the Word of God, since Christ had ordered Peter to put up his sword when he unsheathed it to defend his Master. They did not need this opinion for themselves, having long ago settled in their own minds what must be done; but they felt that they needed the moral support it would give them with their followers.

Long discussions were held by the various faculties, and finally a report was agreed upon that declared that, although it was not right nor justifiable to carry on an aggressive war for the spread of Christianity, yet, when a cruel enemy threatened the destruction of God's people, it was not merely right, but a sacred duty, to take up arms in self-defense. It need hardly be added that the leaders made good use of this decision.

The news of the disaster that had befallen the pilgrims reached Prague the very same day. By the orders of Priest Ambrose, the alarm-bells were sounded in all quarters of the city. The people, gathering in crowds in the public squares, and hearing the sad tid-

ings, offered to go at once to help their brethren. Nicholas and Žižka, however, turned their energies to another quarter; namely, to the danger that threatened them from the Royalists stationed on the Small Side.

Their first attempt was to get possession of the stone bridge, which was guarded by a strong force of Royalists. Their attack was answered by the roar of artillery, that had recently been introduced into warfare, and for this reason filled the hearts of the people with terror. After a sharp skirmish, the victory leaned toward the popular army; but the fighting continued far into the night along the streets of the city. The burning of houses, the ringing of the fire-bells, the roar of the artillery, and the continual skirmishing in the streets, together with the plundering and pillaging, made it "a night of sorrow and consternation, wailing and mourning, as if the judgment-day had come." During the night, when the Royalists saw that they were losing on all sides, they were seized with a panic, and Queen Sophia, with some lords, fled to her castle of Kunratic. The spoils gained by the people were immense. The victory was ascribed to Žižka, whose fame, from this day on, continually increased.

Although the victory was decisive for the popular party, the fighting did not cease; for the Royalists, receiving re-enforcements, soon returned to the scene of action. For a long time victory fluctuated between the two sides; but when the Royalist army was constantly augmented by aid sent by lords, knights, and cities, who declared war against Prague, the popular party was induced to treat for peace. An armistice was entered upon that was to last till the 3d of April of the following year, the lords agreeing to protect the

administration of communion in both kinds. Žižka, however, with several of the more zealous reformers, did not approve of this. They left the city with such troops as willingly went with them, and marched into the vicinity of Pilsen, where they tried to get possession of the towns and fortresses ignoring the armistice entirely.

When the news of this battle reached Sigmund, he gave up the campaign against the Turks, and returned home, going as far as Brunn, Moravia (December, 1419). Here he was met by messengers from both parties, each laying before him its grievances. The popular party presented a petition asking that he guarantee to the nation the freedom of the Word of God, and the use of the chalice in communion. Sigmund promised to take the matter into consideration when he reached Bohemia, and to do justice to all parties. In the meantime, he ordered them to cease from persecuting priests that refused to give communion in both kinds, and to remove the barricades from the streets of Prague. The messengers returned home much disappointed; for they saw that the reply was a virtual denial of their request.

Queen Sophia resigned the government, and Čeněk (Vincent), of Wartenberg, was appointed regent, with two lords to assist him. Sigmund did not go to Bohemia at once, but turned to Silesia, where he hoped to raise an army large enough to crush all opposition at one blow.

CRUELITIES OF THE MINERS OF KUTTENBERG.

During the armistice, the cruelties perpetrated by the miners of Kuttenberg were worse than open war-

fare. When once blood had been shed, each party thought it had the right of retaliation. The miners had always been enemies of the Bohemian people. This was partly due to the fact that they were mostly German immigrants, but chiefly because, as miners, they were granted many privileges, both on account of the superior skill required of them, and on account of the dangers to which they were exposed. This made them regard the native husbandmen with contempt. Besides this, Kuttenberg was the second city in the kingdom, and there was considerable rivalry between its inhabitants and those of the capital. Thus, when the people of Prague declared against the dogmatic claims of Rome, those of Kuttenberg made every effort to prove their unquestioning allegiance to papal authority. To show this more effectively, they followed the example of Constance, and burned every heretic who was so unfortunate as to fall into their hands.

As the number of victims that chance threw into their hands seemed too small, regular bands were organized, whose aim was to secure as many heretics for burning as possible, and to keep up the zeal of the brigands a liberal reward was provided—one kopa* Prague groschen for a Hussite laic, and five kopas for a priest. The business of kidnaping heretics proved so lucrative that little discrimination was used, and many people were put to a horrible death whose sole fault was that they were Bohemian peasants. At last so many heretics were daily brought to the city that the executioners became weary of the task, and cast about for some method to expedite the work. It was

* Kopa=sixty.

decided to use the abandoned mines for this purpose. Hundreds of victims were hurled together alive into the common grave, where they perished from the wounds received in falling, or from starvation. In a few short weeks about 1,600 persons were thus murdered.

The evasive reply of the emperor, and the cruelties that the miners were allowed to perpetrate without any protest from the Royalists, showed the people what they might expect from their enemies, and they spared no pains to prepare themselves for the coming contest. Nicholas of Hussinetz tried to fortify Green Mountain near Nepomuk, but he was dislodged from the position by the lords from the neighboring castles. Žižka, at Pilsen, was more successful. The city was soon in his hands, the fortifications repaired, and even some monasteries were used as a means of defense. Still, he was in constant danger of an attack, and, as he could not fully trust the citizens of Pilsen, he decided to seek a place of greater security. Such a location was found about fifty miles southeast of Prague, in a spot where now the city of Tabor stands. Here the Lusnitz, an affluent of the Moldau, winds around a craggy hill, forming a peninsula, the neck of which is scarcely thirty feet broad. This narrow neck of land Žižka pierced with a deep ditch, and fortified with a thick wall, so that the place was quite cut off from the surrounding country. Only one side of the hill was accessible, and on this declivity the soldiers pitched their tents. The whole place was surrounded by fortifications and strong towers, so as to be impregnable to any engine of war then known. This became the rallying point of the Taborites. In course of time,

houses were constructed, and Tabor, as the place was named, became quite a town. During the whole of the Hussite wars Tabor remained the asylum of disaffected spirits of all kinds. Not only the peasants, but the large land-owners came here, ready to sacrifice all for their religion. Here all were equal; here all enjoyed both religious and political liberty; and here there arose the most extreme views in regard to government and religion. Indeed, in this little town could be found the germs of most of the modern Protestant sects, and also of modern Socialism.

The extreme views held by some of the Taborites were not at all in harmony with the religious ideas of the leaders, Žižka and Nicholas; but finding themselves powerless to stem the general current of thought, they strove to turn the enthusiasm into channels that would lead to the general good. Žižka organized a regular form of military government, placing the town under four lieutenants but as he excelled all in wisdom, dignity of bearing, and military skill, he soon became the acknowledged head of all the Taborites.

Žižka possessed the rare gift of being able to adapt himself to all conditions of men, and to turn to his own advantage the most adverse circumstances. As his troops were composed almost entirely of peasants, he adopted weapons that they could use with the greatest advantage. Flails heavily covered with iron, clubs covered at the end with heavy iron spikes, were the ordinary arms, with which his men did such fearful execution that the Royalists feared more the flail of the peasant than the sword of a regular soldier. As the war went on, Žižka developed the method of forti-

fication known as the wagonburg; but this will be spoken of in another connection.

While Žižka was making fortifications at Tabor and organizing an army out of the peasants that flocked thither from all directions, the Emperor Sigmund was likewise making preparations ^{Crusade against Bo-}hemia, for war, but on so grand a scale that the heart of a less intrepid warrior than Žižka would surely have failed him. Large bodies of men were recruited from all his dominions—from Hungary, Moravia, Silesia, and Lusatia. Nor was this all. Pope Martin raised against Bohemia the most dreadful weapon that could be used in those days—a crusade was declared against the country, in which all nations were invited to participate, abundant indulgences being promised to all who should aid it either in person or by contributing funds. Sigmund invited the princes of Germany to meet him in Breslau, to consult together how, at one blow, they could crush out all opposition in Bohemia. The arrival of the distinguished guests at Breslau was honored by an act of signal cruelty. John Krasa, a citizen of Prague, being in Breslau on business, was ordered to be arrested, because he had defended Hus and had taken communion in both kinds; and when he refused to recant, was dragged about the city tied to a horse's tail, and afterwards burned alive. After these preliminary proceedings, Sigmund had the Pope's legate proclaim the crusade, and then preparations were made to invade Bohemia.

The news of these proceedings filled the land with consternation. The people saw that the coming contest was to be a life-and-death struggle for them, and they prepared to meet it like men.

At this time the ruling spirit among the people of Prague was the priest John Zelivsky, who has already been spoken of in connection with the storm in the city hall of New Town. Being a man of great eloquence and burning zeal for his nation's welfare, the proclamation of the crusade against his country roused his indignation to the highest pitch, and he at once began to hurl the thunderbolts of his wrath both against the Pope and the emperor. Borrowing his figures of speech from Revelation, he called Sigmund "the seven-headed dragon"* that had come into the world to destroy the new-born child—the truth lately discovered—and for which all the faithful were to fight, and if needs be die, since through it salvation would come to the world. "He said their mother, the Church, had not merely become a stepmother, but a monster that devoured her own offspring. With bloody hands she had raised the cross, that symbol of peace and grace, using it as a standard under which bloodthirsty hordes were to rally to the destruction of faithful believers in Christ." Such words uttered by a beloved preacher, whose own sincerity no one could have called into question, roused the people to a frenzy of enthusiasm, so that they were not only willing to fight, but eager to lay down their lives for their country and their religion.

The Royalists, and especially the Germans, became alarmed, and prepared to leave the city, thinking they could return as soon as Sigmund arrived; for they had no doubts as to his ability to subdue the heretics. They were not at all hindered in this exodus, so that

* Sigmund had signed himself the King of the Seven Crowns.

about seven hundred found their way to the neighboring towns.

While these things were going on, a deputation of Bohemian lords, among whom was the regent, Čenek of Wartenberg, went to Breslau to make another attempt to bring the king to some favorable terms. But they were given so cool a reception that Čenek returned to Prague full of grief and bitterness. He saw that there was no alternative for him but to become the enemy either of his country or of his king. His patriotism finally triumphed, and he decided in favor of his country. Forming a league with several powerful lords, they issued a proclamation to the nobility of the realm, inviting them to join this league. They declared that as the freedom of the Word of God and the general good of the nation was threatened, it behooved all loyal sons of Bohemia to refuse their allegiance to Sigmund, since he had not been elected by the lords of the realm nor had been crowned King of Bohemia, but had shown himself to be the cruel enemy both of the kingdom and the people. He had cast the deepest insult upon the nation, charging it with heresy, and had permitted the miners of Kuttenberg to perpetrate the foulest atrocities. Moreover, he was guilty of misdemeanors too numerous to mention. It was further declared that no Bohemian, at the penalty of being deprived of honor, goods, and life, could separate his interests from those of his nation, but must retain his natural love for his country and help it in this hour of need. This proclamation was sent to all parts of the country, and proved so effective that one lord after another sent letters to the camp of Sigmund severing his allegiance from the crown. Indeed, the disaffection

toward the emperor was so great that secret messengers were sent to the King of Poland offering him the crown of Bohemia.

The burning of John Krasa at Breslau, the declaration of the crusade, and the barbarous acts of the miners, led the other parties to acts of retaliation. This was especially the case with the extreme Taborites, who regarded the monks as the chief cause of the miseries with which the country was afflicted. They looked upon monasteries as the dens of wickedness, the strongholds of Satan; and whenever they could, they tore them down, murdering the cowed inmates. Historians speak with great regret of the many works of art that were thus ruthlessly destroyed by these wild fanatics. At this time, according to the historian Æneas Silvius, Bohemia excelled all other countries of Northern Europe in the magnificence of its temples. Whoever has studied the history of the country up to this date, can not doubt the truthfulness of this remark; for whenever a king or great lord committed some infamous crime, he quieted his guilty conscience by donating a part of his ill-gotten wealth to build and endow a church or a monastery. Charles IV, although one of the best kings the country ever had, in his religious fanaticism robbed the country by spending vast sums of money for these purposes. He filled the land with greedy monks and priests, who ate out the substance of the peasant, the widow, and the fatherless, and poisoned the moral atmosphere with their licentious living. The evil now threatening the country could be traced directly to those priests and monks; and had the people regarded them with indifference, they would have showed criminal stupidity.

THE BEGINNING OF WAR.

The armistice agreed upon in Prague the year previous was now drawing to a close, and both parties were preparing for the coming struggle.

About the close of April, Sigmund, together with his allies, entered Bohemia with an army of 100,000 men. City after city fell into his hands, and the prospect of withstanding his power seemed so small that many of the noblemen, becoming alarmed, returned to their former allegiance. Among these the most noted was the late regent, Čenek of Wartenberg, through whose efforts so many of the lords had been won for the popular party. Now he not only deserted the people, but committed an act of basest treachery. Under pretense of treating for an armistice, he received two messengers from the king, William Zajic of Hasenburg and Ernest Flaska of Pardubic, and made a secret treaty with them, promising to deliver the fortress of Prague into their hands. When the news of this treachery transpired, the city was filled with amazement and grief. Čenek's flag was taken down from the Old Town Hall, rent as his faith had been rent, and hung upon a pillory, beneath which was placed a hat with his coat of arms painted beneath it, as a sign that he had acted in an underhand manner.

Then the infuriated multitude, deprived of their leader, seized what arms they could, and rushed upon the fortress, if possible to regain, by desperate valor, what had been lost through treachery. The attack, made in so disorderly a manner, was not successful; but the traitor Čenek became alarmed, and made his escape by a secret passage.

The fortress of Vyšehrad, having fallen into the hands of the Royalists some time previous, the people of Prague were now in a most precarious condition. With a strong force of the enemy at Hradschin, the Small Side was entirely at the mercy of the Royalists, and the New Town was constantly threatened from the fortress of Vyšehrad.

As the large stone buildings on the Small Side afforded protection to the enemy whenever they wished to sally out to search for heretics, the authorities decided that it should be destroyed. The inhabitants were therefore removed to the other two towns, and the buildings given over to the flames. The soldiers of the fortress, in retaliation, attacked the Old Town, destroying several of its buildings.

While these things were going on at Prague, the Imperial army was approaching nearer and nearer, and the people began to fear that certain destruction awaited them. In this extremity, they made another attempt at reconciliation. Sigmund was now at Kuttenberg, where the messengers met him. As was the custom in those days, they brought him rich presents, and, kneeling before him, begged him to pardon the disturbances that had been made in Prague; that they were ready to open the gates of the city to him and break down the fortifications that had been made; but, at the same time, they begged that they might not be debarred the use of the cup in communion.

Sigmund, feeling sure of victory, gave them a very hard reply. He declared that he had taken a solemn oath to exterminate all heresy with fire and sword, and that he would not recede from this should it cost him his kingdom; no, not if all the inhabitants of Bohe-

mia should perish, their habitations be turned to dust, and the land be turned over to strangers. Moreover, he was determined to do this, should it cost him all his possessions, his body, and his soul. The messengers then asked him to show some justice and mercy, upon which he replied that the people should pull down the barricades, take their arms to Hradschin or Vyšehrad, and then, when he came to Prague, he would show them some mercy.

This last effort for a reconciliation meeting with so cruel a rebuff, the people began to prepare for a desperate resistance. Messengers were sent to the Taborites, beseeching them to come to their aid, and they willingly responded to the call. The Taborites, from the beginning, had placed no confidence in the promises of Sigmund, and, instead of looking forward to a reconciliation, they strained every nerve to be prepared for war. Now they were able to send good, excellently-drilled, and well-equipped soldiers to the help of Prague. The troops were commanded by the four lieutenants of Tabor, Žižka being chief in command.

Sigmund, hearing of the re-enforcements sent to Prague, thought it a good opportunity to capture the fortress of Tabor; but, although the besiegers were twenty to one of the besieged, they were defeated and pursued, so that they fled, leaving rich spoils for the ever needy Taborites.

In the spring of 1420, Sigmund reached Prague, together with the armies of the allies, that were commanded by some of the most illustrious princes of Christendom.

The imperial army wasted fourteen days in skirmishes that were fruitless of results; but while this

was going on, another effort was made to effect a peaceful settlement of the difficulty. The leaders of the Taborites, the chief men of the city of Prague, and other persons of note tarrying in the city, met together, and drew up four articles, which, if guaranteed to them by the king, they would agree to make peace. These were the celebrated "Four Articles of Prague," that afterwards played such an important part in the Hussite Wars.

These Articles were as follows :

I. The Word of God is to be freely preached throughout the Kingdom of Bohemia and Margraviate of Moravia,

II. The sacrament of the body and blood of Jesus Christ is to be given in two kinds—bread and wine.

III. The priests and monks are to be deprived of their worldly goods and compelled to live a life of poverty, to serve as a pattern of humility to others.

IV. All crimes called mortal sins are to be punished according to the laws of the land, without any regard to the position of persons committing them.

These articles were sent for consideration to the Pope's legate, but his reply was of such a character that the people saw that all further attempts for peace would be futile, and they therefore prepared for the coming struggle.

The forces of the allies were so stationed as to command all the highways leading into the city of Prague but one ; and Sigmund determined to gain possession of that one, and, by cutting off all connection between the city and the country, compel it to surrender by starvation. But so sagacious a commander as Žižka was not unmindful of

The Battle of
Vitkov.

the importance of keeping a free communication with the country. The road in question was on the east side of the city, in what is now the suburb of Karlin, on one side of which is an elevation called Vitkov, which commands the country for quite a distance. Upon this elevation Žižka made a strong fortification, surrounded by ditches and breastworks, and here he took his stand with a strong force. Among these were also some Taborite women, who were not a whit behind the men in working upon the fortifications.

The day of the grand attack was fixed by the allies for the 14th of July. The army was divided up, and the different divisions were to fall upon the city from several directions at the same time ; but the force stationed at Vitkov was doomed to be the first to meet destruction. The Meissen cavalry, together with the Austrians, Germans, and Hungarians, to the number of 25,000 men, came forward to the attack, intending to make short work here, and then join the rest of the forces in attacking the city itself, the garrison from Vyšehrad sallying out to their assistance as soon as they should be needed. The plan of attack was so well laid that success seemed inevitable.

The Meissen cavalry, commanded by Henry, Count of Isenburg, made the first attack. Blowing their trumpets, they fell with great impetuosity upon one of the fortifications. The garrison fell back, all except twenty-five men and seven women, who declared that a Christian should rather die than retreat before Anti-christ. At this point the division under the direct command of Žižka came forward, and for a while the general himself was in great peril ; but his followers succeeded in beating back the attack with their power-

ful flails. That moment was one of intense anxiety, both to the people of the city and to the army at Vitkov. All seemed lost! The women, children, and old men who could not fight were upon their knees, wailing and beseeching Heaven to aid their cause. Within an hour the crisis was over, the tide turned in favor of the Taborites. The besiegers were repulsed, falling back in great disorder. The victors pursued the flying enemy, forcing them down a precipitous height, where many perished, being trampled upon by the horses that rushed on in the wildest confusion. Many more perished in trying to swim across the river.

This defeat filled Sigmund's heart with bitter sorrow; and, what was even worse, discouraged his army, so that the rest of the plan had to be abandoned. Indeed, the defeat seemed to have a demoralizing effect upon officers as well as upon privates. The German princes, out of spite, caught and burned every Bohemian they could get hold of; and when the Bohemian lords objected to this, they were charged with favoring heretics. Then the allies began to fire their cannon upon the city, for which they were severely reprimanded by Sigmund, who told them not to destroy his inheritance needlessly. Then nature itself came to the assistance of the besieged. The allies had neglected to bury the dead. It was July, and the stench arising from the dead bodies of men and horses, not only attracted swarms of insects of all kinds, but poisoned the air with pestilential vapors, causing much illness and suffering. The allies, thinking only of their own safety, one by one left the army of Sigmund, and all further attempt to capture the city was consequently given up.

The day at Vitkov—afterwards known as Žižkov—was a glorious victory for the Taborites, its moral effect being even greater than the material. The people felt encouraged and strong, ready to redouble their efforts for their cause. Žižka, however, did not indulge in any idle elation. He regarded this as the beginning, and immediately began to make preparations for the great struggle which he expected, and which surely would have come had not the army of the besiegers become demoralized.

The Reformers, seeing that the advantage was on their side, again began to treat concerning the Four Articles of Prague. A meeting for this purpose was held under the open sky in the Small Side; but no practical results were reached.

In the midst of the confusion, while the German princes were leaving the Imperial army, Sigmund was crowned King of Bohemia in the cathedral at Hradschin, July 28, 1420.

Žižka remained in Prague for some time; but his followers offending the citizens of Prague by breaking into and pillaging churches and convents, he thought it best to withdraw again into the country.

After the victory of Žižkov, the Pragites turned their attention to the fortress of Vyšehrad. They secured the assistance of a number of Utra-
The Battle of Vyšehrad.
 quist lords, and some Taborites, who hastened to their aid from some of the neighboring towns. The great danger that threatened the garrison was the scarcity of provisions. Sigmund made every effort to relieve them, but was baffled in all his attempts by the vigilance of the besiegers. After his coronation, Sigmund withdrew to Moravia, and as soon as his army

was reorganized, he started, with a force of 20,000 men, to aid the garrison at Vyšehrad. The commander of the fortress, pressed by want and suffering, made an agreement with the besiegers that if Sigmund did not arrive upon a certain day, he would surrender, having no doubt that the promised aid would come in time.

Sigmund came about the time he was expected. The besieged saw his army with flying banners, and followed by a long line of wagons loaded with provisions. The besiegers turned to meet the coming enemy, and the signal for battle was given ; but just a few minutes before, the time of the armistice had expired, and, bound by their word of honor, the troops from the fortress could not go to the help of their sovereign. As the battle progressed, they became fired with enthusiasm and implored their officers to let them go to aid their friends, but this was strictly forbidden.

The battle raged with great fury, and although Sigmund had a much larger force, he was defeated, leaving the battle-field in great confusion. He marched to Kuttenberg. This battle proved especially disastrous to the Moravian lords, twenty-four of whom were left upon the battle-field. Most of them had accepted the new faith, but had not severed their connection with the emperor, deceiving themselves that some reconciliation would soon be effected, which would leave them enjoying both the good-will of their ruler and their religion.

After the battle, the garrison of Vyšehrad surrendered as had been agreed. The victorious generals complimented them highly that, in a time of so great a temptation, they still had preserved the time-honored faithfulness to the given word. Wagons were provided

for them in which to take away their private goods, and a guard was sent to protect them on their way. Some of them, overcome by the consideration with which they were treated, left the side of the king, joining the popular army.

After the battle, as the men and women wandered among the dead and wounded, their hearts were filled with compassion. They remembered that they were brethren, people of the same nation and speaking the same language. The Taborite priests alone were without pity; they ordered that the bodies remain unburied as food for wolves and vultures. But this cruel command was not heeded. During the night many willing feet hastened to the battle-field, and loving hands with tenderness performed the last rite to the fallen soldiers.

After the disastrous defeat at Vyšehrad, Sigmund, as has been said, fell back to Kuttenberg, where he tried to make the people believe that he had won a signal victory. To make up for his losses, he plundered the estates of noblemen, not even sparing those that had not yet taken up arms against him. The Hungarian division of Sigmund's army, stationed at Nimburg, committed fearful depredations upon the surrounding country. Villages were plundered and sacked without mercy, and the inhabitants subjected to the most atrocious cruelties.

The effect of these lawless acts was that many lords, who still had adhered to the king, now threw up their allegiance and joined the popular party. They were also influenced, to some extent, by a proclamation issued by the army in Prague, wherein it was plainly shown that Sigmund was the enemy of the Bohemian people, since, in the battle of Vyšehrad, he had

placed the Bohemians and Moravians in the most dangerous places, showing far more care and consideration for the Germans and Hungarians. The leaders now openly declared their intention of depriving him of the crown and electing a king of their own choice.

CRUELITIES OF THE WAR.

Some old historians represent John Žižka, the first great commander of the Hussites, as a bloodthirsty savage, and his followers as extremely fanatical and cruel. The Hussites were cruel, 't is true ; but not more so than the crusaders that invaded their country. Judging the people from a modern point of view, both parties were exceedingly cruel and bloodthirsty ; but the fault lay more with the cruel times than with the individuals. Still it may be said, in palliation of the acts of the Hussites, that their enemies began the deeds of cruelty. It will be remembered what horrible atrocities were committed by the miners of Kuttenberg, and that without even a reprimand from their sovereign. The burning of the citizen Krasa, in Breslau, before the very eyes of the first princes of Christendom, was an act of inexcusable lawlessness that could not be left unavenged by the Hussites.

Even before the battle of Vyšehrad, the mayor of Litomeritz, to please his sovereign, ordered seventeen citizens to be drowned, simply because they favored the new teaching. He did not spare the lover of his own daughter, who, finding her pleading all in vain, flung herself into the river and perished with the rest of the victims. The Hussites retaliated.

At the surrender of Ricany, Žižka ordered eleven priests to be burned alive. The soldiers shut them up

in a deserted hut, and, unmindful of their pitiful cries, their promises that they would conform to the "Four Articles," the hut was set afire, and they were left to perish in the flames.

This horrible deed was overmatched by one committed by the Kuttенbergers, February, 1421. The town of Chotěbor, having fallen into the hands of the Taborites, under their leader Hromádka, was again besieged by a band of miners from Kuttenberg. Being hard pressed, Hromádka agreed to surrender, on condition that the garrison should retire unharmed. But no sooner did the miners gain possession of the town, than, totally disregarding their word of honor, they seized three hundred of the Taborite soldiers, shut them up in barns, and burned them alive. Some four hundred more were reserved for even a worse fate, being hurled alive into mines and left to perish of starvation. The leader, Hromádka, with two Taborite priests, was taken to Chrudim, and all burned in the public market-place.

These acts of barbarism were somewhat counter-balanced by those of Žižka, at the siege of Chomoutov, the following month. The city was strongly fortified, and the inhabitants, feeling perfectly secure, roused the besiegers to the highest pitch of fury by their taunts, imprecations, and blasphemies. In their madness the Taborites attacked the walls with such fury that an opening was made in several places at once, upon which the infuriated soldiers rushed into the city, murdering every one they met, sparing only some women and children, and leaving thirty men alive, to bury their neighbors, as they said. About 2,500 persons perished in Chomoutov on that day.

The Taborites possessed a means of retaliation that the Catholics did not. Churches and monasteries were very sacred and dear to the Catholics, and these were ruthlessly plundered and destroyed by the Taborites, the Catholics being unable to retaliate, since the former had no churches nor monasteries.

The victory at Vyšehrad greatly encouraged the Hussites, and they no longer concealed their design to deprive Sigmund of the crown of Bohemia.

War Contin-
ued. They called upon all the States to resign their allegiance to the king, threatening to compel, by armed force, those that still refused to do so. Žižka had been so successful in the southern part of Bohemia, gaining so many towns, that Ulric of Rosenberg, one of the most powerful lords, made a treaty with him, agreeing to give his subjects the freedom of "The Four Articles of Prague." Such concessions extorted from the Catholic lords would have been productive of greater results had the Hussites themselves been in harmony with each other. John Zelivsky, who, at this time, was the virtual ruler of Prague, tried to introduce the Taborite worship into the city, but was opposed in this by the more conservative citizens. He also opposed the sending of the embassy to the Polish king, and in this he was upheld by Nicholas of Husinetz, who, next to Žižka, was the most influential leader among the Hussites. Nicholas said that they ought to have a king of their own people, not a foreigner. At this time it was supposed that he was not disinterested in this, but that he desired to secure the crown for himself. As the embassy was sent in spite of the opposition of Nicholas, and several other matters were also arranged contrary to his wishes, he left

the city in anger; but, on the way, met with an accident that ended his career. His horse became unmanageable, Nicholas was thrown off, and his leg broken. He died from the effects of the injury, December 24, 1420.

A contemporary author, speaking of the death of Nicholas, says: "Some citizens of Prague, who had adopted the religious views of the Taborites, mourned for him greatly; but others rejoiced, giving thanks to God that he had removed from their midst this deceitful man, whose counsels led not to peace, but to dissensions among the parties." Still it can not be denied that the death of Nicholas was a great misfortune to the Hussites; for he excelled all the other leaders in sagacity and political wisdom. Žižka, although a great general, was no statesman, consequently there was no one who knew how to take advantage of the victories gained, turning them to the public good.

In the spring of 1421, Žižka won many victories, gaining possession of many towns in the southern part of Bohemia. He besieged Pilsen for several weeks; but the inhabitants defended themselves so valiantly that he was satisfied with making a treaty with them, in which they agreed to give full freedom to "The Four Articles of Prague."

After leaving Pilsen, Žižka went to Chomoutov. The account of this battle, and the fearful cruelties there perpetrated by the Hussites, have already been related.

The frightful catastrophe to the town of Chomoutov, whose fortifications had been regarded impregnable, made the hearts of the people fail them with

terror, and they did not wait to see the dreaded enemy at their gates, but sent messengers offering to give themselves up to the mercy of Žižka. Thus, without striking a blow, the Taborites gained possession of numerous small towns, besides the important ones of Melnik, Kaurim, Kolin, Nimburg, and Caslav.

Among the towns struck with terror at the approach of the Taborites, none trembled with fear as the miners of Kuttenberg. And they had cause. For three years they had enjoyed the pleasure of murdering Bohemian peasants, and their treachery to the prisoners of Chotibor seemed to be a climax to their infamous course against the Hussites; and now their guilty conscience told them that they could look for no mercy from the approaching enemy. They determined to fight to the last extremity, selling their lives as dearly as possible. They sent as large a force as they could muster against the Taborites at Kolin, but seeing the large force of the enemy, their heart failed them, and they returned to the city, bearing the sad tidings that their only hope lay in the mercy of the enemy. Messengers were immediately sent to the Hussite camp, who implored the leaders that their city, the gem of the Bohemian Crown, be spared, and the inhabitants allowed to remove in such time as the Hussite leaders should designate. The petition was accepted on condition that the inhabitants, men, women, and children should form a procession, and go out to meet the Hussite army, asking forgiveness for their crimes. The day for this ceremony was fixed for April 25th, when the procession, headed by a priest bearing the holy eucharist, went out of Kuttenberg and marched as far as Sedlec, where, meeting

the Hussite army, they knelt down, asking forgiveness of God and the Commonwealth of Prague. The monk, John Zelivsky, stepped before the procession, and, after enumerating their crimes, he exhorted them to repent and do better in the future. He spoke with so much earnestness that both sides wept aloud, and finally united in singing a well-known hymn, beginning with "We praise thee, O God," the penitents singing one verse, and the Hussites the other. The Kuttенbergers then begged that Peter Zmrzlik, a man of much wisdom and moderation, be appointed dictator of the city, and this petition was also granted. Then the Hussites that were to assume the government were taken into the city amid great rejoicings, the people praising God that they had been saved from the impending destruction.

The reconciliation between the people of Kuttенberg and the army of the Hussites was followed by that of Čenek of Wartenberg. After the capture of Kolin, this lord had offered to return to the Hussites, but they rejected his offers, saying that they could not trust him, unless he come with his whole force to help them in the siege of Jarmirn. Being in earnest, he accepted the condition. Coming before the army near that city, he knelt down before the holy eucharist, and publicly confessed his sins. John Zelivsky asked him: "Sir Čenek, dost thou acknowledge that thou hast sinned against God and the Commonwealth of Prague?" He replied: "I do so acknowledge." The priest continued: "Dost thou beseech God and the Commonwealth to forgive thee?" "I do," replied the penitent. He then went to Prague, where a treaty was drawn up between him and the city.

The humiliation of so great a lord as Čeněk was not without important results. Shortly after this, Ulric of Rosenberg announced to the Hussites, in the name of Sigmund, that His Majesty was willing to treat with them in regard to the Four Articles of Prague.

This declaration was followed by an event that astonished the people still more. Conrad, the Archbishop of Prague, to the consternation of all Christendom, openly declared for these same Articles. He did this with some limitations and a letter to Sigmund, in which he clearly stated his reasons and his motives for this; but this only added greater moral strength to the act.

The people of Prague celebrated this event with ringing of bells, and singing of "*Te Deum laudamus*;" but the Taborite priests regarded it with suspicion, calling it "but the healing of the monster Antichrist."

The immense estates of the archbishop at once became the property of the Commonwealth, since, according to the Third Article, such possessions were forbidden to the clergy. This deed, so magnanimous in the sight of the Hussites, was looked upon by the Church as utterly wicked, and deserving of the severest punishment. Conrad was therefore excommunicated by the Pope, and John Zelezny, the Bishop of Olmutz, appointed his successor.

June 7, 1421, the fortress of Prague surrendered to the city, and by this the power of the Hussites was so firmly established in Bohemia, that they determined to carry the war into Moravia, to gain possession of the cities that had remained loyal to the emperor. They were met on the borders by some Moravian lords,

and it was agreed to hold a General Diet of all the States belonging to the Kingdom of Bohemia, where they were to discuss matters of faith, but chiefly provide for some regular form of government for the whole kingdom. But before speaking of this Diet, several phases of the Hussite war will be related.

THE MILLENNIUM.

The feverish excitement that the people fell into at the beginning of the war, led them into the wildest fanaticism and the most extreme beliefs. A prophecy got spread abroad that the world was soon to be destroyed by fire, like the ancient cities of Sodom and Gomorrah; and only five cities that were loyal to the chalice were to be saved. The time had come, said the prophets, when Christ was no longer to rule the earth in mercy but in wrath, and all the wicked were to be rooted out of the earth, the Taborites being chosen as the avenging angels to perform this task. This being accomplished, Christ himself would descend from heaven to remain with his faithful till the end of the world. Then there would be no need of baptism, nor of Scripture teaching; for children would be born pure, and people would be wise and in grace, having the law of God written in their hearts. There would be no kings, no rulers, nor subjects; all would be equal, and have all things in common.

THE ADAMITES.

Some of the fanatics, however, could not wait till the millennium should come, but attempted to bring it about by force. They carried their fanatical notions to such lengths that they were ordered to leave the

town of Tabor (February 1421). About three hundred of them left the Taborites, threatening vengeance upon their faithless brethren. Some of them went to such extremes with their extravagant views that they at times discarded all garments, saying that they were in a state of innocence. About this time, Žižka returned to Tabor, and learning of the disturbances caused by the fanatics, and that they had gone about plundering villages and murdering the inhabitants who would not accept their belief, he sent a small force against them. Some fifty of them were taken prisoners, and when they refused to abjure their errors, they were ordered to be burned. The rest of the Adamites, as they were called, fled and found a refuge upon a small island in the river Nezarka, near Veseli. Here they lived together in the wildest licentiousness and wickedness. At times they fell upon the neighboring villages, plundering the people, and carrying away young maidens, who were compelled to submit to the embraces of their captors. Their leader was called Adam, hence their name Adamites. Žižka again sent a small force against them, which routed them completely. All were put to death, except two, who were sent to Prague to explain their belief to the doctors of the university.

THE TABORITES.

All the Bohemians who had adopted some of the doctrines taught by Hus, and as a consequence had thrown up their allegiance to Emperor Sigmund, were called Hussites; but the Hussites themselves were divided into two parties or sects—the Taborites and the Calixtines, or Pragites, since Prague was their chief city.

Among the Taborites were a number of distin-

guished men, whose religious views were far ahead of their times. And yet, at this time, no one was so far advanced in intellectual development as to advocate freedom of religious opinion. All believed it right to burn heretics. However beloved Hus had been, and however his death had been mourned, the people never complained that the Council of Constance had no right to burn him if he were a heretic, but because they burned him having failed to prove his heresy. The rock upon which Hus was wrecked was the dogma of the infallibility of the Pope and Church. And yet the followers of Hus, each in his own person, claimed this very infallibility. They claimed the right of private interpretation of Scripture, and the conclusion they reached seemed to them the only true one; and they were as ready to charge with heresy all who differed from them, as the Church was ready to persecute them for disagreeing with her teachings.

At this time the two great occupations of the Bohemian people were war and the study of religious doctrines; and as each one claimed the right to interpret the Scripture in his own way, there were taught by the different priests all the creeds of the modern Protestant Churches. The priests that were the leaders, were the monk John Zelivsky, Master Jacobek of Meis, Master John of Pribram, and Peter Payne the Englishman, who usually went by the name of Master English. Payne, on account of his zeal for the teachings of Wycliffe, had been expelled from Oxford, but had received a warm welcome at Prague, being made one of the masters of the university. At first he sided with the Utraquists; but later he became a most zealous Taborite. What varied opinions were held in re-

gard to religious matters may be judged from the following event: The Taborite priests were invited to Prague to discuss the advisability of using vestments during the ceremony of mass; but when they came they were confronted with seventy Articles, showing them into what errors they had fallen. Some of the more important charges were that they wanted to abolish all holidays except Sunday; that they disbelieved in purgatory and the intercession of saints; that they served mass without any ceremonial and in the vernacular; that they abolished fasts; that they held all church ornaments, such as pictures and statuary, as sinful; and finally, one of the most heinous of heresies was, that some claimed that, in the sacrament of the communion, Christ was present only spiritually, not corporally.

The more moderate of the Taborite priests denied most of these charges; but quite a number held them, and acknowledged it openly. Among these, the most prominent was a young priest from Moravia named John Houska. Houska taught that the bread and wine taken at communion remained unchanged, and that it was sinful to worship these symbols as though they were the real body and blood of Christ. This doctrine spread so rapidly that the Taborite priests became alarmed, and sent Jacobek and Pribram to Prague for counsel how to deal with this new heresy. In the meantime the discussions concerning these points became so bitter that Houska, with three hundred followers, was driven from the camp; but thinking better of it, the priests recalled him, determined, if possible, to induce him to abjure some of his errors. Not being willing to give up as much as they desired,

he decided to return to his own country. On his way thither he was captured, together with his associate, Prokop. He was at once asked what he thought of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Houska replied promptly that Christ had but one body, which was in heaven, and consequently the eucharist being in many places at the same time, could not be in his body. "The pious lieutenant, unable to bear such blasphemy, began to beat him with his fists, and would have burned him upon the spot, but that the priest Ambrose begged that he might have him for a while to instruct him in better doctrine." After laboring with him for two weeks without any success, he sent him in chains to Raudnitz, where Archbishop Conrad was then staying, to deal with him as he saw fit. Both Houska and Prokop were cast into a dark dungeon, and, after two months of fearful suffering, they were taken out again, tortured, and then put to death. While suffering fearful agonies, they were urged to ask the people to pray for them, to which Houska replied: "We do not need your prayers; pray for those that need them." "And thus saying much more that was dreadful and offensive to the ears of pious people, the said Martin was shut up in a barrel and burned, together with his disciple. May God be praised for this!" Thus wrote an eye-witness of this horrible tragedy.

The few writings left by the unfortunate Houska prove him to have been a man of great learning and eloquence, and far less fanatical than most of the Taborite priests. The guilt of his martyrdom may be placed equally at the door of the Taborite leaders and of the moderate Hussites in Prague.

THE DIET AT CASLAU.

JUNE, 1421.

The calling of the Diet at Caslau was the first attempt, during the war, to renew in Bohemia a government based upon the laws of the country. For two years the country was almost in a state of anarchy, and, as a consequence, many evils had sprung up. All the States of Bohemia, Moravia, Silesia, and Lusatia were invited to send delegates to the Diet, in order that some measures should be devised to provide for the government of the whole realm.

King Sigmund at this time was in Hungary protecting his dominions against the encroachments of the Turks; but he urged the lords still loyal to him to attend the Diet to protect his interests. Safe-conducts were provided for all, so that they might be secure, both against power and the laws.

After much discussion the Diet agreed upon the following articles:

1. All were to abide by the Four Articles of Prague, governing themselves according to them, and defending them against all enemies.

2. Sigmund was no longer to be acknowledged King of Bohemia, for he had openly scoffed at those holy truths, and, moreover, had willfully destroyed both the lives and the honor of the Bohemian people.

3. The government of the country was to be intrusted to a committee of twenty persons—five from the nobility, four from the district of Prague, two from Tabor, five from the knighthood, and four from the cities.

4. All religious difficulties were to be referred to

a Synod meeting at Prague, and composed of the most illustrious clergymen of the land.

The messengers of Sigmund brought a letter from their sovereign, wherein he humbly agreed to submit to the wishes of the people, and, in case of disturbances, to see to it that the old condition of affairs was restored.

In reply to this, the Diet drew up a memorial in which were enumerated all his crimes against the country. Sigmund was charged with carrying off the crown and crown jewels and many treasures from the church at Hradschin and from the fortress of Carlstein. He had also appropriated to his own use the funds of the widows and orphans. He had dishonored the nation by allowing two of her most excellent men, Hus and Jerome, to be burned as heretics; and had consented that the Pope should excommunicate the nation and declare a crusade against it. If he wished them to acknowledge him their king, he must see to it that the disgrace be wiped out, the property unlawfully taken restored, all grievances redressed, and his opinion in regard to the "Four Articles" precisely stated. Then, if he further guaranteed to them all the ancient liberties of the realm, they would take him back as their lawful sovereign. The States now addressed Sigmund in about the same spirit that he addressed them a year previous, when, standing at the head of a vast army of crusaders, he felt confident of a sure and speedy victory.

The Diet closed with much satisfaction and harmony among the delegates; but the provisions made for the government of the country, although seemingly wise, proved entirely inadequate. The executive power,

backed neither by high authority nor physical force, proved too weak to command respect and obedience.

One of the aims of the Diet of Caslau was to secure unity in the Church; but in this they were no more successful than in providing a stable government. It would, indeed, have required miraculous power to unite the widely-differing sects under one Confession of Faith. John Zelivsky, the ruling power among the lower classes, although a fanatic and a demagogue, was the only one who succeeded in keeping up a semblance of concord between the Taborites and the Hussites of Prague. This was so difficult a task that even he was at times put to his wit's end, and obliged to resort to stratagem and intrigue to accomplish his purpose.

By means of a stratagem, Zelivsky succeeded in consolidating the governments of the Old Town and New Town, and then, asking the people if they did not desire the same unity in the Church, he so intimidated the Calixtines that the Taborite worship was established also in Prague.

Shortly after, the Synod met in Prague. All the influential priests and theologians of the kingdom were present, and many excellent measures were decided upon and recommended; but, in absence of any strong government, all such recommendations remained a dead letter.

WAR CONTINUED.

While the Diet was in session at Caslau, the princes of Silesia raised an army of 20,000 men, and invaded Bohemia in the neighborhood of Nachod. They tried to make the Hussites weary of the war by making it as fearful as possible. The unarmed inhabitants of the villages were murdered without mercy; many of them

had their limbs hacked off, and were left to perish miserably.

At the request of the people near Meis, an army was sent from Prague to compel the towns of that neighborhood to accept the "Four Articles." The Battle of
Several monasteries were taken and burned; Brux.

and, on July 21st, the town of Bilin fell into the hands of the Hussites. The whole neighborhood was soon in their hands, except the strong fortress near the city of Brux. The garrison defended themselves with much valor; but re-enforcements coming to the besiegers, all seemed lost, and the unfortunate people begged that they might be permitted to leave the fortress with their lives. This request would have been granted but for a certain fanatical priest, who declared it would be the height of folly to let them escape, so that they could take up arms again in another place; but that, since God had delivered them into their hands, they should be dealt with as the elders saw fit.

This priest, however, wrongly interpreted the will of God. A strong force, coming to the assistance of the besieged, fell upon the over-confident Hussites with such impetuosity that they were completely routed. Those that were taken prisoners were burned without mercy.

When the news of this disaster reached Prague, there was great mourning and weeping. The priests bemoaned the cruel conduct of their brethren, and in their sermons showed that Almighty God had sent this as a punishment upon them. When at first they had fought with humility, showing mercy, success smiled upon them everywhere; but now, when the brethren had become degenerate, fighting more for plunder than

for the truth, robbing the poor of their possessions and murdering their neighbors with more cruelty than the heathen, God had become angry, and had sent this calamity upon them. Therefore it behooved them to repent, in order that God should turn away his wrath and again receive them into his favor.

A greater calamity even than this befell the Husites shortly after. While Žižka was besieging the fortress of Rabi, in July, he lost his second eye, and so became totally blind. The news of this caused great sorrow among the people; for Žižka was unquestionably the ablest general in the army, one that it would not be easy to replace. But as soon as the wound healed up, the great chief, not at all disheartened, returned to his men, taking charge of the army as before. Indeed, it seemed that, with physical blindness, his spiritual insight became all the clearer; for the victories he gained after this were more brilliant than those he gained before. He was conducted to the field of battle in a car that was kept close to the principal standards of his army, and everything relating to the locality of the place, the strength and position of the enemy being explained to him by his lieutenants, he gave his orders accordingly. By this means he was enabled to command his army and to perform the most skillful strategic movements, almost as well as while he had his eyesight.

THE SECOND CRUSADE AGAINST BOHEMIA.

As Sigmund was still engaged in the war against the Turks, the German princes held a Diet, where they agreed themselves to continue the crusade against Bohemia.

Being urged, both by the emperor and the Pope, to spare no pains in their preparation, they raised an army of 200,000, and prepared to invade the country from the west near the city of Eger. Among the distinguished personages at the head of the army were the five electors, the Archbishops of Mayence, of Kolin, and Treves, and many of the princes of the empire. As Sigmund expected soon to end the Turkish war, he agreed to invade the country from Moravia, while the allies came in from the opposite direction.

Before beginning the march, the soldiers received orders to give no quarter, but to destroy utterly all heretics, except little children who as yet were too young to understand such things. This order was literally obeyed, the troops murdering every Bohemian they met, since Bohemian and heretic were supposed to be synonymous terms.

The first encounter between the crusaders and the Hussites was at Zatetz, where there was gathered a large number of people, who had fled from The Battle of
Zatetz. their homes at the approach of the invaders. The city was protected by a force of 6,000 men, among whom was a division of 600 cavalry. The allies made several attempts to capture the city, but were repulsed each time. After a siege of several days, news came that re-enforcements from Prague were coming to the assistance of the besieged. This, at its best, could have accomplished little against the vast army of the crusaders, had not their power been weakened by dissensions. As at the siege of Prague, each petty prince was restless under the command of another, whom he regarded in no way superior to himself; consequently there was no unity of action, without which an army

can not win success. Then, too, the troops were disheartened by the unsuccessful attacks upon the city. When, therefore, the news came that the Prague army was coming under the command of Žižka, who had never yet lost a battle, the crusaders were seized with a panic, and, setting fire to their camps, fled in wild disorder. The besieged, seeing this, sallied out, pursued the flying enemy, killing large numbers, and bringing many prisoners into the city.

The German princes attributed this defeat to Sigmund's failure to co-operate with them, as had been agreed; but the common soldiers themselves mocked the cowardice of their leaders, saying that they were possessed of so great a hatred for the faithless Bohemians that they not only refused to meet them, but would not even look into their faces.

It would almost seem incredible that so vast an army should be defeated by so small a force; and that not in one instance, but in many. But the reason for this is not strange. The Bohemians were upon their own territory, fighting for their homes, their country, and their religion. It often happened that their wives and children were in the camp with them, so that defeat meant death to those they held most dear, and, generally, suffering and insults worse than death.

The crusaders, on the other hand, had no such interests at stake. Their wives and children were safe at home. Many of them were fighting for a principle that they only half believed, and many more merely for the plunder they hoped to gain. Defeat, therefore, did not mean much to them—a little disgrace that could easily be attributed to the lack of ability of their commanders.

THE EMBASSY TO POLAND.

One of the things that the Diet of Caslau did in regard to providing a permanent government for the country, was to send an embassy to Poland, offering the crown of Bohemia to the ruler of that country. This, however, was not the sole aim of the embassy, the Bohemians wished to form an alliance of friendship with the northern and northeastern Slavonic nations. The messengers asked nothing more than the freedom of the "Four Articles," and they had hopes that this condition would be accepted, since these nations in their practice were already Utraquists.

Vladislav, the King of Poland, fearing to offend the Pope, refused the proffered crown; but his nephew, Vitold, the Duke of Lithuania, anxious to form an alliance that would strengthen him against the inroads of the Prussians, not heeding the wishes of his uncle, himself began to treat with the messengers, if possible, to secure the crown for his own country.

Hearing of these negotiations, Sigmund determined to make an end of them. He therefore sent messengers to the Polish court, offering his twelve-year old daughter Elizabeth to the king, who was a widower; and, when objections were made to her extreme youth, Sophia, the widow of King Václav, was substituted in her place, with a wedding dowry of the whole of Silesia. This marriage, however, never took place, the messengers sent to negotiate the final arrangements being captured by the Hussites. The Bohemian embassy was also captured on its way home, the attendants being all put to death, and the ambassadors cast into prison, where they remained until redeemed the following year.

SIGMUND'S CAMPAIGN IN THE SOUTH.

While the allies were retreating from Zatetz, Sigmund was preparing to invade the country from the south. His army numbered 80,000, and was under the command of the great Italian general, Pipa of Ozora. Having formed an alliance with Albert, the Duke of Austria, that prince came to his assistance with a force of 12,000 men.

With so large an army, commanded by so great a general, for some time success crowned every undertaking. In Moravia, city after city fell into the emperor's hands, and Prague began to fear the threatening danger. Yet, in the very face of destruction, the people could not lay aside their religious dissensions, which at times led them into acts of barbarous cruelty. Their lawless proceedings so embittered the nobles that many of them deserted the popular cause, returning in their allegiance to the emperor. Among these the most noted were Ulric of Rosenberg, and Čenek of Wartenberg. The authorities of Prague sent a small army against Sigmund, which accomplished nothing, being disappointed in the aid it expected from the renegade noblemen.

In this critical moment, Brother Žižka, as he was commonly called, again proved the best friend of the country. At the call of Prague, he immediately repaired to the city with as large an army as he could muster. As soon as the report spread that Žižka was coming, the bells were rung, and processions were formed that went out to meet him, as if he were a general already returning from a glorious campaign. He remained in the city a few days, discussing with

the authorities how best to meet the coming danger, and equipping his army for the campaign. December 8th he started for Kuttenberg, where he intended to await the Imperial army. The Prague army, under its own leader, followed him the next day.

The war that now followed between Sigmund and the Hussites was one of the most interesting of that age. Never before had it been so clearly shown how a small army, actuated by high moral principles and commanded by an able general, was able to cope with vastly superior forces. Sigmund had a well-disciplined, splendidly-equipped army, accustomed to fighting, at least three times as large as that of the Hussites, and commanded by the renowned General Pipa, of Ozora. Both men and generals, therefore, went to the scene of action fully confident that now, at last, the power of heretics in Bohemia would be forever broken.

In the campaign the Hussites had not only to compete with vastly superior forces, but, what was even worse, with treachery. When Žižka arrived at Kuttenberg, he was received with every appearance of joy, which, however, was only feigned. It will be remembered how kindly the miners had been treated by the Hussites the year previous; this kindness they now rewarded with the blackest ingratitude. A plot was formed to murder all the Hussites. When, therefore, the Hussite army left the city to go out to meet the Imperial forces, the work of destruction began. The miners and other Catholics fell upon the unsuspecting people, and ruthlessly massacred all who could not give the word agreed upon, not even sparing helpless women and little children. They were aided in this bloody work by the soldiers of Sigmund, who had,

through treachery, found means to enter into the city. With the loss of the city, Žižka found himself cut off from all means of obtaining provisions, and, after several unimportant actions, he got so hedged in by the Imperial forces that his army was in great danger of being cut to pieces by the enemy. By great exertion he succeeded in keeping up the spirits of his troops, and finally, by a daring strategic move, he succeeded in extricating his army from its critical position.

Seeing that his army was not sufficiently strong to cope with the Imperial forces, Žižka appealed to the people to send him re-enforcements. This appeal was so promptly responded to that, in a short time, he was prepared to meet the enemy. Sigmund, confident of victory, was spending the holidays in Kutteneburg, thinking he could attack and defeat the Hussites at his leisure. On the 6th of January (1422), Žižka returned and attacked the Hungarians with such impetuosity that they were thrown into disorder and fled in all directions.

Sigmund, fearing lest his own army should fall into the hands of the Hussites, prepared to leave the city; and to prevent the Hussites from using it as a means of protection, he ordered the people to move out, and then set it afire. But the Hussites came in time to put out the fire, and thus a large part of the city was saved.

The Hussites, mindful of the atrocities committed by the miners and the Hungarians, were so eager for revenge that they could not be restrained from pursuing the enemy, who were marching to German Brod. While the Hungarian cavalry were crossing the River Sazava, the ice gave way, and many perished in the river. Five hundred wagons filled with clothing,

money, jewels, and provisions, fell into the hands of Žižka.

At German Brod another fierce battle was fought, and again the Royalists were defeated. The women and children were ordered to leave the city, and all the men were put to the sword, and the city burned to the ground. It remained seven years without an inhabitant. After these reverses, Sigmund retired to Moravia, having lost some 12,000 men.

The wholesale slaughter of the men at German Brod did not meet the approval of Žižka. It offended both his religious feelings and was a direct violation of his principles of warfare; consequently he never ceased to regret it to the day of his death. He would call his troops to German Brod "to do penance in the place where they had sinned."

After the battle of German Brod the Hussite army returned to Prague, where there had been great troubles on account of the religious dissensions, caused mostly by John Zelivsky and his followers.

The presence of so many Utraquist lords, and especially of Žižka, led the moderate citizens to hope that something might be done to free them from the bondage to the fanatics. The people of the Old Town were mostly moderate Utraquists, while those of the New Town were extreme Taborites, or followers of John Zelivsky. After many violent demonstrations and stormy debates, it was finally agreed that the officers of the city should resign, and new ones be elected in their places. After the new aldermen were installed into office, four priests were appointed to manage the religious affairs of the city. These were Jacobek, Peter Payne the Englishman, John Cardinal, and John

Zelivsky. All matters of faith were to be referred to this committee, and those refusing to submit to their decision were to be driven from the city, and if still obstinate, to suffer capital punishment. Peace being restored, Žižka retired to Tabor.

When the new aldermen were elected it was found that the Utraquists were in the majority; so, taking advantage of this, they determined to redress some of the wrongs they had endured under the despotic rule of Zelivsky. Being violently opposed by that priest, they decided that it would be for the good of the community to put him forever out of the way. To accomplish their design they resorted to treachery. They invited him and some of his friends to the Old Town City Hall, saying that they wished to consult with them on some important matters. Suspecting no evil, they came. After the pretended consultation, the executioners entered the room, and, without any explanation, took possession of the prisoners. Zelivsky did not seem to be alarmed, and, with great presence of mind, begged the aldermen to reconsider the matter, since such an act could not but entail serious consequences. But they were obstinate in their folly, and ordered the executioners to take the prisoners into the court and behead them immediately.

The City Council had taken every precaution that no riot should arise from this. The hall was well guarded, and troops had been stationed in all the public squares. But the bloody deed did not long remain a secret. The blood being washed away, some of the water flowed beneath the wall into the street and told the dreadful tale. The whole city was in an uproar; the bells rang the alarm; the constantly-swelling crowd

rolled towards the Town Hall like the waves of the ocean. Hasek of Wallenstein, with a force of several hundred men, went among the people, trying to quiet them by telling them that nothing had happened to their priest. They demanded, if all were well, that his person should be immediately produced, and when he began to make excuses, they called him a traitor and a murderer, and would have torn him to pieces upon the spot had he not succeeded in galloping off through the crowd and saving himself by flight. The aldermen fled through the back passages of the hall, and the guards followed their example. The people, breaking into the hall and going into the court, soon found the bodies of their murdered friends. The head of their beloved pastor was recognized, taken out, and exhibited to the multitude. At the sight of this ghastly spectacle, their grief knew no bounds. Some wept, some tore their hair, some fainted from agony, and some relieved their feelings by frightful curses and imprecations against the perpetrators of the deed. The head was passed from one to another until it remained in the hands of a certain priest, who carried it about on a platter, his own grief being so great that he could not utter a word. It is needless to add that the aldermen were hunted down and put to death without mercy. It had been well had they listened to the warning words of their victim. Not only did they lose their own lives, but the evil they brought upon the city was worse than that which they had tried to redress. For many days the mob ruled the city unhindered, and finally restored the very government that had been overthrown with so much difficulty. Then the death of John Zelivsky was a serious loss to the

Hussites. Although a great fanatic, he was the only one capable of acting as a mediator between the Taborites and the people of Prague, which, in times of peril, proved of incalculable value.

THE POLISH ALLIANCE.

The defeat of the Imperial army at Kuttenberg and at German Brod had the effect of breaking up the alliance between Vladislav, the King of Poland, and the emperor. The Polish king now gave his cousin, Vitold of Lithuania, permission to accept the crown of Bohemia, which he did, not in his own person, but in behalf of his nephew, Sigmund Corvinus. Being a devoted Catholic, he sent letters to the Pope explaining and justifying his conduct. He begged His Holiness to remove the interdict from Bohemia, and to treat the people with kindness; for he felt assured that most of them were now anxious and ready to return into the bosom of the Church; that it was only in this hope that he accepted the crown for his nephew Corvinus.

Sigmund Corvinus was a young man of much promise. Wise and thoughtful beyond his years, he added to great amiability of manner, energy of will and warlike valor. Besides this, he had always cherished a sincere love for the Bohemian people. The Bohemians were rejoiced that such a king was to rule over them, and felt greatly encouraged to have their independence of the emperor acknowledged by another State.

Sigmund Corvinus raised an army of 6,000 volunteers, and marched into Moravia by way of Silesia. The emperor, hearing of his approach, and believing his army much larger than it really was, became

alarmed, and retreated into Hungary, burning the camps and destroying the fortifications behind him. Sigmund Corvinus's first attack was upon Olmutz, where he was repulsed with a loss of 500 cavalry. Thence he went against the town of Unicov, which soon surrendered. Here he took the Lord's Supper in both kinds, to show that he accepted in good faith the "Four Articles of Prague." A Diet was called at Caslau, where he was formally accepted King of Bohemia. He then went to Prague, where he was received with many public demonstrations of joy.

The people that awaited the Polish prince with some misgivings were the followers of John Zelivsky; for they instinctively felt that he would ally himself with the moderate party and so deprive them of their regained prestige. And their fears were not unfounded. Although the young king was very prudent, and avoided interfering in any of the established customs of the country, he soon discovered that if peace and order were to be maintained, the city government must be in the hands of the more moderate citizens. The aldermen, perceiving that the more influential people were taking sides with the king, finally resigned, and a better class of men were appointed in their places.

To aid the authorities in securing and keeping order, the king issued a series of regulations by which the city was to be governed.

It was declared that the year of Jubilee had come; therefore it was the duty of all to become reconciled with each other, that past offenses were to be forgotten, and the exiled called back. Both the king's troops and those of Prague were strictly forbidden to play checkers and other games, to swear or use improper

language, and to quarrel. Should any one so far forget himself as to draw his sword, he was to lose his hand; and if he wounded another, his head was to pay the forfeit. The inkeepers were forbidden, under penalty of death, to keep women of loose character.

Another regulation referred to the coinage of money. This was strictly forbidden in all places except Prague and Kuttenberg, in which cities were kept the royal mints of the country.

It seems that a great deal of poor currency was afloat. An old writer speaks of this as follows: "In the year 1421, they made the groschen out of chalices and monstrances, and called them 'chalicelets;' and later, when they lacked silver, they made money from brass with the royal stamp, and these they called 'flutelets;' and they made money from kettles, candlesticks, and other brass utensils; and they made these brass flutelets in the fortresses, in the beer saloons, in the gardens, and in the villages, and they made so many that everybody had enough. And then, when the people refused to take the money, they wrung their hands, being deprived of their estates."

ŽIŽKA'S ATTITUDE TOWARD SIGMUND CORVINUS.

While Sigmund Corvinus was still in Moravia, he sent a letter to Žižka ordering him not to pillage the country any more, but to show his obedience to his king. As Žižka was one of the most disinterested generals the world had ever seen, and on several occasions had really rescued his country from imminent destruction, the tone as well as the contents of this letter greatly offended him, and the reply he sent was written in a similar spirit. The king, seeing his mis-

take, changed about face, and soon a complete reconciliation was effected between himself and his illustrious chief. After that, Žižka wrote to the people of Prague as follows :

“ With God’s help, Amen !

“ May it please you to hear, Lords and Brethren, that we, together with the Taborite brethren, have accepted his Princely Grace as our helper and the chief ruler of this realm. We desire to grant His Grace willing obedience ; and, with God’s grace, in all lawful measures to be helpful to him. We also beg you, that henceforth ye lay aside all anger, ill-will, and hatred, and finally forgive each other, so that ye can honestly pray : ‘ Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.’ But if ye still refuse to do this, quarreling among yourselves and raising riots, then know that after this day, we, with God’s help, together with His Grace our King, and with the help of all the faithful, mean to see to it that due vengeance is meted out, let the offender be whosoever he will. . . . See to it that ye obey the authorities, and love each other as one man ; for then God will be with us and his holy grace, and he will grant us success in every good undertaking.

“ BROTHER JOHN OF THE CHALICE.”

The reconciliation between Sigmund Corvinus and Žižka was so sincere, that they addressed each other by the titles of father and son ; but all the Taborite chiefs were not so magnanimous, and from this trouble came later.

THE SIEGE OF CARLSTEIN.

As soon as peace and good order were established in the city of Prague, the king determined to lay siege to Carlstein. This fortress, built by Charles IV, was situated upon a precipitous height, and built so strong as to be impregnable to all the engines of war then in use. Here were kept the crown, crown jewels, and

many valuable documents. The Bohemians wanted to get possession of these for their new king; for they did not know that Sigmund had carried them out of the country.

The garrison consisted of 400 men, and the besiegers numbered 25,000; but, although they exhausted all the known methods of attack, they could not compel the fortress to surrender. Finally a truce was made for a year. The garrison were permitted to open their gates to the emperor should he come, but not to render him any assistance against the Hussites.

The year 1422 was very unfortunate for the Hussites. Not only did the soldiers fail in all their undertakings, but another serious misfortune befell the country. Vladislav, the King of Poland, had no rest from his priests until they induced him to break up the alliance with Bohemia. Entering into a treaty with the emperor, he ordered his cousin of Lithuania to recall Sigmund Corvinus. The young king was very loath to leave the throne that he had ascended so auspiciously, and he tarried as long as possible; and when he was at last obliged to go, he expressed his sincere regret, and also the hope that his departure should be only temporary. In this hope the Bohemian people were disappointed; for the Polish king not only agreed to recall Sigmund Corvinus permanently, but even raised an army to aid the Emperor Sigmund against the Bohemians.

This same year the German princes met at Nuremberg, and agreed to fit out a third crusade against Bohemia. Coming to the conclusion that the cause of their previous failures were too many chiefs, they decided to place the command of the army into the

lands of a single general, and selected for this purpose Frederick the Margrave of Brandenburg. But when the time came to begin the march, so few princes had responded to the call, that now, indeed, there was but one general but no army, as before there had been a great army but no general, or rather so many generals that their mutual jealousies frustrated all unity of action.

INTERNAL TROUBLES.

The crusade of 1423 having failed, the Bohemians were left unmolested; but this very security seems to have been the means of awakening the old hostilities between the parties. After the departure of Sigmund Corvinus, Prague was governed by Sir Hasek of Wallenstein, and William Kostka of Postupitz. Both of these were zealous Hussites, who desired to go further in religious innovations than most of the masters of the university, and for a while it seemed that they would hold the same position that John Zelivsky did—be the mediators between the Calixtines and the Taborites; but the old friendship could no longer be maintained, since the former, especially those belonging to the nobility, leaned more and more to the Catholics. Finally an open rupture occurred between the parties. Just how it came about is not recorded by any writer of those times; but in the spring of 1423, Žižka carried on a war against the Calixtine lords, and the people of Prague against the Taborites. Among the disaffected lords was Čenek of Wartenberg, who changed sides for the third time. He was at the head of a conspiracy among the noblemen, who were plotting to destroy the power of the Taborites, and then, after some sort of understanding about the “Four

Articles," accept Sigmund as their king. Žižka, seeing that by such a proceeding all that had thus far been gained would be lost, could not, as a faithful "soldier of God," suffer this to go on unhindered. In April, a battle was fought between him and Čenek of Wartenberg, in which that nobleman met with a disastrous defeat.

At the same time the Pragites, together with some of the Royalists, were besieging the Taborites in their fortress of Krizenetz, not far from Wozitz; but after remaining near it for several weeks, they gave up the siege, having met with more damage than they were able to inflict upon the enemy.

Delegates from all parties finally met at Konopist, and some sort of a peace was patched up. How much the dogmas of religion were mixed up in the events of this war, is shown by the fact that in this treaty it was decided that vestments in religious service were the ordinance of the Church, and not one of the commands of the Scripture; hence they were not obligatory. Still, to show their good-will, some of the Taborite priests served mass with vestments, and some of the Calixtines without them.

ŽIŽKA TAKES THE OFFENSIVE.

In the fall of 1423, Žižka invaded Moravia. Not meeting with much opposition, he took village after village, until he got to the boundaries of Hungary. The Hungarians, it seems, did little to hinder his march; for they hoped to inveigle him farther and farther into their territory until he should be so far that they could cut off his retreat and utterly destroy his army. But the wary chief recollected himself before it was too late, and then there began one of the most

masterly retreats known in history. His camp, composed of several hundred wagons, with considerable artillery, began to move back to Moravia, going across rivers, forests, mountains, and being constantly harassed by the pursuing enemy. The Hungarians, determined not to let their prey escape them under any circumstances, made many fierce attacks; but being repulsed each time, they finally declared that Žižka was no man, but the very devil himself.

Meanwhile, the people of Prague, with some Utraquist lords, were again discussing the advisability of coming to some understanding with Sigmund. This, however, caused so much bitterness among the parties that civil war was the result. The reaction among the Pragites seemed so utterly wicked to the Taborites, who could not endure the thought of making any compromise with "Antichrist," that in their zeal to appear loyal to their convictions, they became intolerably fanatical, so that Žižka himself could bear it no longer, and left Tabor, making his home among the Horebites, a more moderate branch of the Taborites, whose seat was at Königgratz. By this act, however, he did not resign his position as commander-in-chief of their armies.

The year 1424 was the last and also the bloodiest of Žižka's life. All the old chronicles agree that he did nothing but give his nation one cruel blow after another. By shifting their faith, the Calixtines had aroused his suspicions. He regarded them as hypocrites, and as such they were more hateful to him than open enemies. Žižka divided people into three classes: sincere Christians, open enemies of God and the truth, and insincere Christians, or hypocrites. The last he

regarded with a most deadly hatred. He wanted all Bohemians to belong to the first class, and he thought it his duty to do all in his power to exterminate all hypocrites, or, as he called them, the enemies of God. However cruel he was, he was not selfish, his single purpose being at all times the good of his nation. He was exasperated the more against the Utraquist lords by receiving a warning that they had hired an assassin to murder him for a reward of 2,400 groschen.

In January, 1424, Žižka marched against the Utraquist lords and defeated them at Skalitz near Jarmirn. But some time after he was surrounded by them in Kosteletz, and, doubtless, would have been cut to pieces had not his friends come to his rescue. From Kosteletz, Žižka retreated towards Kuttenberg, pursued by an overwhelming force of the enemy. Finally, finding a favorable position near Malesov, he fortified himself with his wagons, and awaited the enemy. The description of this battle gives such an excellent idea of his mode of warfare that it will be given *verbatim*:

“Žižka, with his wagons, betook himself to a certain elevation, and shutting himself up, awaited the enemy, who were pursuing him in the belief that he was retreating before them. The commanders gave the order for attack even before all their troops had come up.

“Žižka prepared for battle in the following manner: The wagons were placed wheel to wheel, and the sections were ordered to take their positions; first the cavalry, and then the infantry. Then several provision-wagons were separated from the rest, and filled with stones, and placed in the midst of the cavalry so that they could not be seen. When about half of the enemy had crossed the valley, the signal for attack was

given to the cavalry, while the infantry regulated the motion of the wagons. As soon as the enemy was near enough, the wagons were ordered to be let down upon them, and these wagons coming down broke their ranks. At this moment the cannon, were fired and the rest of the troops rushed to the assault. Against this mode of warfare the usual military tactics were found to be useless, for the retreating troops, meeting with the rest, pushed them back before them in confusion. And thus Žižka won the battle, and the arms, wagons and provisions; and this while he was blind in both eyes."

Among the persons of note that had fallen in this battle is mentioned Andrew of Dub, Žižka's son-in-law, and this is the only record that gives any intimation that he had a son-in-law, who belonged to the nobility.

After this battle, Žižka turned against Kuttenberg, which he captured without much difficulty. By this victory he deprived the city of Prague of its chief source of income. From Kuttenberg he went to Kaurim, then to Bohemian Brod, and finally to Nimburg, all these cities surrendering without much opposition. Leaving these cities, Žižka went to attack Pilsen, but the people had made such ample preparations for their defense that he was obliged to raise the siege without accomplishing anything.

The continual dissensions among the Bohemians would have wrought their ruin had not similar dissensions kept the German princes from any united action against them. Indeed, Sigmund was charged with lukewarmness in putting down Hussitism in Bohemia, and some went so far as to charge him with

leaning to it himself. On January 17, 1424, the electors met in Bingen, and agreed that they could dispense with an emperor, that the imperial scepter could be held by each alternately.

The news of this agreement filled Sigmund with wrath, and he decided to ask for no further aid of the treacherous princes, but to seek to cement yet more closely the friendship between himself, the Duke of Austria, and Vladislav of Poland. For this reason he repaired with his whole court to Cracow, where preparations were made for extirpating all heresy both in Bohemia and Poland.

RETURN OF SIGMUND CORVINUS TO PRAGUE.

At the urgent but secret requests of the Bohemian lords, Sigmund Corvinus finally broke his promises to the Polish king, and returned to Prague June 29, 1424. He had an army of 1,500 cavalry, all volunteers, among them many who had deserted from the ranks of Vladislav's regiment that he intended to send to the aid of the emperor.

The news of this filled the Polish king with rage and grief, and he ordered the estates of his nephew to be immediately confiscated to the crown. But what caused him the bitterest sorrow was that, notwithstanding all his lamentations and protestations, the European nations refused to believe that he had not been privy to the act. When, therefore, he sent a force of 5,000 men to Moravia to aid the Imperial army, they were sent back by the Duke of Austria, who feared that the cause might be hindered rather than aided by them.

Prince Sigmund Corvinus, coming to Prague not

backed by any authority, was no longer regarded as a "king called and chosen," but merely as a private individual, whose noble qualities had greatly endeared him to the people. The people of Prague, however, chose him as a sort of governor (*Starosta*), but his authority did not extend beyond the limits of the city.

At this time, Albert, the Duke of Austria, was carrying on a vigorous war in Moravia with such success that soon he had the whole country in his power.

THE LAST DAYS OF ŽIŽKA.

When Žižka raised the siege of Pilsen, he went to Zatzitz, from thence to Laun and Klatov, and gathering a large army in these cities, he determined to march against Prague itself, since it seemed to him the chief obstacle to the spread of the gospel, and was, moreover, the seat of the unfaithful nobles, who were constantly trying to make an alliance with the enemies of God. It was reported that he intended to destroy the city utterly, not leaving one stone upon another.

Although the soldiers were devotedly attached to him, still they felt very reluctant to attack a city that from the earliest times had been venerated as the "Mother of Bohemia," and they did not hesitate to express their dissatisfaction in loud murmurings. The citizens of Prague were filled with apprehension and terror, and earnest discussions were held in all parts of the city how best to meet the threatening danger. Finally, envoys were sent both from the City Council and from Sigmund Corvinus to treat with the offended chief and dissuade him from his purpose. Among the envoys was Master John of Rokycan, a man distinguished for his learning and eloquence, and—what

had the greatest weight with Žižka—a man of unquestionable sincerity. By appealing to all that was noble, Rokycan finally succeeded in turning him from this design. He was probably aided in the attempt by the common danger that threatened them from Moravia. A treaty of peace was made, the violation of which was to cost either party 12,000 kopas* Prague groschen. Žižka, however, did not have much faith in the treaty, for he remarked that he feared it would not last any longer than the peace of Konopist made the previous year.

The Hussites, again united, began to make preparations to go against the enemy in Moravia. The army was in three divisions—Žižka with his Taborites, Sigmund Corvinus with the Pragites, and the army of several lords who had joined the expedition. An old chronicler says: "When they reached the borders of Moravia and turned to attack the fortress of Pribeslav, they were met by an enemy that even the invincible blind chief could not withstand. Not far from this fortress, Brother John Žižka was taken ill of the plague, and exhorting his dear brethren to fear God and defend the truth for an eternal reward, and commending his soul to God, Žižka ended his life the Wednesday before St. Havel's Day (October 11th). The body was taken to Königgratz and buried by the side of the main altar in the Church of the Holy Ghost. Afterwards, it was taken to Caslace, and placed in the Church of St. Peter and Paul."

The Taborites, especially those of Horeb, mourned for Žižka as though he had been a father to them all.

* Kopa=a sixty.

THE DEATH OF JOHN ŽIŽKA.



As they could find no one worthy to take his place, they remained without any chief, and afterwards went by the name of Orphans.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.

John Žižka, or rather John of Trostnov, was born at Trostnov, in the circle of Bechyn. He began his public life as a page of the Emperor Charles IV, and afterwards followed a military career, serving in the armies of Poland. There he distinguished himself on many occasions, particularly at the battle of Tannenberg, in 1410, where the German knights were defeated. Returning to his native land, he became chamberlain to King Václav. The insult offered the Bohemian nation by the burning of Hus at Constance made a deep impression upon his mind, and, brooding over how the wrong might be avenged, he embraced the first opportunity to take sides with the people against the hierarchy of Rome, and finally became the great champion of Hussitism. Indeed, without Žižka there would have been no Hussitism; the adherents of the new doctrine would have been crushed out like the Waldenses before them.

Žižka was a fanatic, but he was more than a fanatic; he was an enthusiast for the law of God, for human liberty and equality. The principles advocated by the Taborite branch of the Hussites were such as would have ultimately led to a pure democracy. Žižka hated feudalism, and one of his aims was to destroy all social distinctions based on birth. For this reason he loved not the Germans; for he saw in them the friends of castes and the enemies of democracy. He was an ardent Slavonian, because at this time the Slavonic

nations still retained many of their primitive democratic institutions.

Žižka was not ambitious. The chief leader of the Taborites, he was never called by any other name than Brother John of the Chalice. He cared not for wealth, for government, nor for glory.

The historian, Æneas Sylvius, says that the Emperor Sigmund, seeing that whatever Žižka undertook prospered, and that the eyes of all Bohemians were turned to him, conceived that it would be well to become reconciled to him and bend him to his will.

He therefore offered him the government of the country, the chief command of his army, and a large sum of money, in consideration of which he was to help him to regain the crown of Bohemia. But Sigmund had mistaken his man—Žižka cared nothing for all these things. Had he been desirous of wealth, he could have obtained it without the help of Sigmund. In the numerous victories he had won over the Imperial army, he had secured rich spoils; but all this he used for the public good, keeping nothing for his own use. His brother, Jaroslav, remained a common page, and his Aunt Anna was so poor that she was obliged to accept support from the city of Prague.

Some have denied Žižka all literary culture, but this is a great mistake. As every one in the camp of the Taborites could read and write, it is not at all probable that the leader alone was illiterate. The well-known hymn that the Taborites used to sing when going to battle—"Ye Warriors of the Lord"—was believed to have been composed by him, which shows that he was a scholar of no mean ability.

As regards religious belief, he was not so fanatical as most of the Taborites. Had he had his own way, the religious reform in Bohemia would not have gone to such lengths, but would have stopped with the doctrines advanced by Hus, and there would have been less argument and more practical piety. With him religion, piety, and goodness were synonymous terms, and he could not conceive of a person being irreligious and yet good and noble. As for himself, he was disinterested in all his dealings, perfectly sincere and upright, true to a given promise, magnanimous at times to an open enemy, but unrelenting in his severity against all half-hearted hypocrites. At times he was very cruel; but the age was cruel, and often he merely followed the example set by the more cruel enemy.

As a warrior he belonged to that small number of generals who, having fought in many battles large and small, never met with a defeat. This is all the more remarkable when one considers that, as a rule, he had to fight against fearful odds, the enemy being larger in numbers, better disciplined, and better equipped.

The blindness of Žižka had this advantage for the Bohemians: his military skill passed to a considerable extent to his lieutenants. Compelled to see through their eyes, he taught them to observe very closely all the advantages that nature offered, or those that could be gained by a judicious division and arrangement of the forces. Doubtless it was the skill and experience thus gained that enabled them to withstand the attacks of the enemy after his death.

The death of Žižka seemed an irretrievable loss both to the Taborites and Calixtines. Indeed, the

whole nation was filled with dismal forebodings, while the enemy rejoiced that now at last had come the time for the humiliation of Bohemia and the extermination of all heresy. 'T is true, with the death of Žižka, the power of Hussitism was forever broken, as well as the growing principles of democracy crushed out. Yet Palacký remarks that the death of this great chief must be regarded as a favorable incident, since it relieved the country of a leader who would have continued a bloody war for a principle that had not sufficient basis in the minds of the people. The Taborites were in the minority, and their democratic principles, both in society and religion, could not have withstood the constant pressure of feudalism.

WAR CONTINUED.

After the death of Žižka, the war was still carried on, although earnest efforts for a reconciliation were made from time to time. Sigmund Corvinus, especially, tried hard to pour oil upon the troubled waters. For some time the Bohemians believed that a reconciliation would be effected, since they were willing to make many concessions. But they had yet to learn that Rome never advanced; that they must re-establish the old state of affairs, or she would never make peace with them.

Although the Orphans of Mount Horeb had said they would choose no commander, since they could find no one worthy to succeed Žižka, they soon found that a chief was indispensable, so they chose Kunes of Belovitz. The leader of the Taborites was John Hvezda of Vicemelitz, aided by such able men as Bohuslav of Swamberg, John Rohac of Dub, and the

two priests, Prokop the Tonsured, or the Great, and Prokop the Small.

The campaign in Moravia was continued under the leadership of Sigmund Corvinus. Some advantage was gained; but, owing to dissensions in the camp, nothing of importance could be accomplished. When the campaign in Moravia ended, the Pragites again began to wage war against the Taborites. The latter marched against Prague; but, aside from gaining some small towns, their undertaking was fruitless of results.

In 1425, their great leader, Hvezda of Vicemelitz, was mortally wounded; but, about the same time, the Calixtines also lost an able leader in Čenek of Warthenberg. Finally, the tide being greatly in favor of the Brethren, as the Taborites and Orphans were called, twenty-two lords and knights made a truce with them, agreeing to give the freedom of the "Four Articles" upon their estates.

THE EVENT AT RADKOV.

The event at Radkov is a small but graphic illustration of some of the peculiarities of the mode of warfare in those days. The Orphans, besieging the town of Radkov in the circuit of Kladrau, broke down the wall and entered the town. The inhabitants set fire to their houses, and took refuge in the large stone mansion of the mayor. The besiegers waited till the fires were down, and then, surrounding the stone house, began to dig under the foundations. This induced the mayor to come down to treat with them. It was agreed that the women and children should be set at liberty, but that in passing out every man would

be searched. When this was announced to the people, their priest asked if he and his two chaplains were included in this agreement. To which the mayor replied: "No, indeed, dear Sponsor, the Hussites show no mercy to priests." Then the priest began to lament, saying: "Alas! how basely ye have beguiled and betrayed me; may God himself pity me! When I wanted to leave you to escape, ye said I should remain; that ye would stand by me, through good and evil, in life or death; that it was not becoming for a shepherd to leave his flock; and, behold, now the flock forsakes its shepherd!" Then the citizens, with tears in their eyes, begged him not to lament, that they would save him yet. They therefore offered to dress him and his chaplains in women's clothes, and thus, in disguise, lead them out of the city. But the priest replied to this proposal: "God forbid that I should so far forget my office and dignity! I am a priest, not a woman; but you men, consider how basely ye deliver me to death, saving yourselves!" These protests, however, availed him nothing. The chaplains were dressed as women, and each one given a child to carry. One by one the prisoners then descended the stairs, the men being seized as they passed, and the women and children let go. Thus all escaped, except those who had hidden in the cellars, they being smothered when afterwards the house was set on fire. Now, when all had descended, the pastor remained above with several young men—apprentices—who, having no means wherewith they might redeem themselves, refused to be taken prisoners. But when they saw all their friends surrendering themselves, their heart failed them, and they too

went down, delivering themselves into the hands of the enemy. Thus the pastor was left alone with an old country priest. These were then brought down by the soldiers. Their liberty was offered them if they would recant; if not, death by burning was the alternative. The brave priest replied: "God forbid that, in the fear of a short agony, I should betray the holy Christian faith! I taught and preached the truth in Prague and in other towns, and in that truth I am ready to die." Then they brought bundles of straw, and, fastening them to his body, set it afire, allowing him to stagger hither and thither, till death made an end of his agony. The country priest likewise perished. The disguised chaplains got safe out of the house; but one of the children began to cry, and the chaplain trying to soothe it, was betrayed, and immediately put to death.

SIGMUND'S ALLIANCES.

While the Hussites were warring among themselves, Sigmund was making every effort to gain the co-operation of the princes of the empire. The Pope also announced new indulgences to those who would join the crusade; but these having been repeated so often, seemed to have greatly deteriorated in value, people refusing to risk their lives for something so intangible. The princes, too, were very dilatory in sending their quota, so that Sigmund felt the necessity of looking elsewhere for help. To induce Albert of Austria to fight with still more energy, he ceded to him still more territory. He also won to his side Frederick the Margrave of Meissen, by the cession of new territory.

WAR CONTINUED.

Albert of Austria again prepared to invade Moravia. The Bohemians, seeing the threatening danger, laid aside their own quarrels, and Pragites, Taborites, and Orphans united their forces against the common enemy. Albert was driven from Trebitz, which he was besieging. The Hussites then invaded Austria and took the town of Retetz. There they met with a grievous misfortune in the death of one of their best commanders, Bohuslav of Swamberg. His place was taken by Prokop the Great, or, as he was often called, Prokop the Tonsured. Next to Žižka, he proved to be the ablest commander in the Hussite army.

Prokop was the nephew of a wealthy knight and merchant in the city of Prague, who, adopting him as his son, allowed him many privileges, taking him with himself in his travels through several European countries. Upon returning home, he was ordained as a priest. Adopting the most extreme views of the Hussites, he was charged with heresy, and cast into prison. Being released, he went farther in his innovations than most of the Taborites, as is proved by the fact that he took a wife.

As chief of the Taborites, he was only their commander, not a soldier; for he never bore arms and never personally took part in any battle. Like the modern commander-in-chief, he planned the campaigns and the battles, leaving the other generals to carry out his plans.

THE BATTLE OF AUSSIG.

Early in the spring of 1426 the Bohemians invaded Moravia, and won the town of Breclav, near the Aus-

trian frontier. Then they directed their attention to the northern part of Bohemia, where their enemies were strengthening their positions by the assistance of the Margrave of Meissen, to whom Sigmund had ceded the cities of Aussig and Most (Brux).

After the various divisions of the Bohemian army had gained some smaller towns, all united and began to besiege Aussig. The siege being pressed with much vigor, the citizens became alarmed, and sent couriers in all directions, imploring the towns to send immediate re-enforcements. At this time the princes of the empire were holding a Diet at Nuremberg, hence could not at once respond to the appeal. Still the call was not left unheeded. Katherine, the Duchess of Saxony, in lieu of her absent husband, gathered troops in Saxony, Thuringia, Meissen, and Lusatia, until she had an army of 70,000 men. The Bohemians, hearing of the preparations making against them, also sent messengers to their countrymen, imploring aid, and an army of 25,000 men, commanded by Sigmund Corvinus, came to their assistance. The Taborites were commanded by Prokop the Great.

When the German army reached the borders of Bohemia, Duchess Katherine made them a short but very earnest address, exhorting them not only to valor but also to care and prudence. The two armies met June 6, 1426. An old historian writes as follows:

“When on Sunday morning the Germans were drawing near to Aussig, the Bohemians sent them kind letters, saying: ‘If now God help you that you take us in battle, and if God help us so that we take you, let us show each other the same mercy.’ But the Germans, puffed up by pride, and confident of vic-

tory, replied that they would never feed heretics. Receiving this hard answer, the Bohemians took a solemn oath to show mercy to no one.

"Although they were loath to begin the battle on Sunday, they saw that it could not be avoided; and so, falling upon their knees, with great humility they implored the help of God. Prince S. Corvinus went among the soldiers, exhorting them to valor and perseverance.

"Prokop the Great, being the chief in command, ordered the troops to fortify themselves with their wagons, of which they had about 500, and await the onset of the enemy. About noon, during great heat and sultriness, the Germans rushed furiously upon the wagon fortifications and succeeded in overthrowing the first row of wagons. The Bohemians held back until the Germans were well tired out, and then in their turn rushed upon the enemy, doing fearful execution with their heavy flails, and slaughtering large numbers of cavalymen by tearing them from their horses with their long hooks, and either killing them at once or leaving them to be trampled underfoot. When, by this unexpected onset, the Germans were thrown in disorder, the Bohemians sallied out of their fortifications, attacking them with such fury that they all turned and fled. Then there followed such a slaughter of the enemy that the river flowing to Aussig seemed to flow with blood. But the larger part of the enemy perished in the flight, some from heat, some from dust and thirst, and some being overtaken and slain by their pursuers. The Bohemians kept their oath to show no mercy; for not even the commanders could control the fury of the soldiers. This was the

bloodiest battle in the Hussite war, the dead left upon the field numbering about 15,000. The booty taken was so great that the victors in scorn pitied the Saxons, who, in addition to their defeat, incurred the displeasure of the Pope by providing heretics with provisions and munitions of war. The city of Aussig was plundered, set afire, and utterly destroyed, so that for three years it remained without an inhabitant."

The glorious victory at Aussig had a very unexpected result. The Bohemians, intoxicated with success, relaxed their vigilance, and, instead of following up the victory, began to quarrel among themselves. Prokop the Great insisted that their immediate duty was to follow the enemy into its own territory, and secure some favorable terms of peace. This, however, was opposed by the Pragites, who declared that their forces were not sufficiently strong to carry on an offensive war. The debate waxed so hot that for a while it seemed that the leaders would resort to arms.

The effect of the defeat upon the Germans was just the opposite. At first they were overwhelmed with shame and grief; but they soon roused themselves, and began to plan how they might retrieve their losses. The princes who, at the Diet of Nuremberg, had tried to shift the responsibilities of the war upon the shoulders of their neighbors, now became united, and made vigorous preparations for a new campaign.

Several important engagements now followed, among these being the siege of Breclav, in Moravia. Albert of Austria surrounded the town with a force of 40,000 men, and cutting off all supplies determined to starve it into surrender. When all seemed lost, Prokop the Great suddenly appeared before the city, de-

feated Albert, and compelled him to retreat with loss and disgrace (November, 1426).

That the cause of the emperor did not look very hopeful is proved by the fact that Ulric of Rosenberg, one of the staunchest of Catholics, made a treaty of peace with the Taborites, and that against the earnest remonstrance of the emperor, who wrote to him as follows: "All good people can see how the Taborites are striving to inveigle you and some other lords into their snares; but, for Heaven's sake, take counsel together and devise some means of saving yourself without being taken in so shamefully by those knaves." But Ulric, looking to his own safety, and to the preservation of his estates, gave no heed to these words.

THE FALL OF SIGMUND CORVINUS.

The Polish prince, Sigmund Corvinus, was at all times greatly beloved by the people; but not reading aright the signs of the times, he committed an act of indiscretion, which at once hurled him from the pinnacle of his glory, and almost cost him his life.

After the war had continued so many years and no definite results were secured, the people began to grow weary, and a great reaction set in, in regard to religious matters. The people of Prague spoke with displeasure of the extreme views of the Taborites, and even declared the teachings of Wycliffe heretical. The followers of Hus now began to fear that if the teachings of the English reformer were allowed to fall into disrepute, the same fate would inevitably follow those of their own great teacher; and to prevent such a misfortune a grand disputation was appointed to be held during the Christmas holidays.

The disputation was held before a large concourse of people, among them Prince S. Corvinus. It seems that the opponents of Hussitism had the advantage; for it was shortly after this that that prince determined to bring back the Bohemians into unity with the Church. He therefore fitted out a secret embassy to Pope Martin, telling him that now was a favorable time to bring back the people into the bosom of the Church. The Pope received the news with great joy, and immediately began negotiations with the two uncles of Corvinus, Vitold and Vladislav, to get their co-operation in bringing about the desired result. Prince Sigmund Corvinus, however, overreached himself. When the news of these secret negotiations transpired among the people of Prague, it was found that the reaction was by no means so great as had been supposed.

When Master John Rokycan, then the most popular preacher in Prague, announced from the pulpit of the Teyn Church what had been done, and explained the full significance of the act, the people were roused to the highest pitch of indignation. The fire-bells were rung; the people gathered in the public squares, ready to take up arms against the "traitor Corvinus." The prince was seized by the city authorities, and for a while imprisoned in the city hall; but later, he was taken to the fortress of Waldstein in Boleslav, where he was kept in close confinement, none of his friends knowing the place of his incarceration. The men who had so ably defended papal sovereignty against Hussitism were exiled from the city, and nothing more was said of going to Rome to beg the Pope's pardon.

Although the action of Sigmund Corvinus was regarded as treason, yet it must be admitted that that

prince had no evil designs against the country. The people were weary of the war, and longed for peace. They would have returned to the bosom of the Church had the Church been willing to make some reasonable concessions. But Rome would hear of nothing but unconditional surrender and unquestioning obedience, and this the Bohemians could not grant without doing violence to all their convictions

The Bohemian leaders now became convinced that, if they would gain anything, it must be gained by compulsion. They therefore decided to turn the streams of blood into the territory of their enemies; to adopt the principle of Rome, "*Vexatio dat intellectum*," and extort from the Church what could not be obtained in any other way.

The chief supporter of this policy was the Taborite leader, Prokop the Great. It will be remembered how, after the battle of Aussig, he advised the commanders to follow the enemy into their own territory, but was opposed in this by the more moderate leaders. Had this advice been followed, much bloodshed would have been avoided. Time proved the wisdom of his opinion, and now, by common consent, his policy was adopted, and he was accepted as the commander-in-chief of all the Bohemian armies.

The Taborites and Orphans now had the ascendancy, and immediately began to carry war into the enemy's territory. This they did, not merely to harass the enemy, but to gain plunder, since their army, being mostly composed of the poorer people, was always in need, and now more than at the beginning of the war, since agriculture had so long been entirely neglected.

Invading Austria with a force of 16,000 men, they

won a glorious victory at Svetla, gaining much booty, and leaving 9,000 of the enemy upon the battle-field. Then they invaded Silesia and Lusatia, where they secured large quantities of provisions.

THE BATTLE OF TACHOV.

The years 1427 and 1428, Sigmund was engaged in the war against the Turks, so that the duty of carrying on the war against the Hussites devolved upon the Pope and the German princes.

The Pope issued a bull declaring another crusade against Bohemia. He chose as his instrument to carry on the great work, Henry Beaufort, the Bishop of Winchester, who had recently been made a cardinal. On account of his high position and his uncommon intellectual gifts, the Pope had every reason to hope that he would carry the war to a successful issue. The cardinal took hold of the work with great energy. Taking his retinue and a small army, he traveled through Germany, preaching the crusade against Bohemia with so much zeal and eloquence that soon he had a vast army at his command. The heavily-armed troops numbered 36,000 men; and the light-armed were estimated by some as 80,000, while other writers say 200,000. The armies were commanded by the princes and bishops from all parts of Germany,—from the west, the Princes of the Rhine, Alsace, Switzerland, Suabia, Bavaria, and the Netherlands; from the north, the Dukes of Upper and Lower Thuringia, the Princes of Hesse, Brandenburg, Brunswick, Mecklenburg, and Pomerania; from the east, those of Silesia, Lusatia, and Prussia; and from the south, Albert of Austria, and the Archbishop of Salzburg.

In the camp of the crusaders the strictest discipline was enforced; in fact, everything possible was done to insure success.

In presence of this terrible danger, the Bohemians again became united, and even some Catholic lords, who had hitherto been the avowed enemies of the Husites, now joined the standard of Prokop, to help to protect their country against the invading host. But although no efforts were spared to obtain new recruits, the country was so exhausted that an army of only 30,000 men could be raised. July 12th, the army of the Taborites passed through Prague with 300 wagons; the next day they were followed by the Orphans with 200 wagons; and the following day came the main army under Prokop the Great; and then the smaller divisions under the various lords. All these marched toward Pilsen, where they expected to meet the enemy. The crusaders entered Bohemia the month previous, encamping at Eger, Kommotau, and Tachov (Taush).

At first the allies had agreed to invade the country from four directions; but some of the princes failing to be prepared in time, the design was given up, and it was decided to lay siege to the town of Miess. The garrison was under the command of Pribik of Klenov, who was regarded as an invincible warrior, and consequently the town was defended most valiantly. Still it would have been but a question of time when they would have been compelled to surrender, had not the Bohemian army come to their assistance. What now follows would seem incredible, were it not authenticated by trustworthy historians.

When, on the 2d day of August, the Bohemian army was seen approaching Miess, such a panic seized the German troops that they left besieging the town and commenced retreating to Tachov (Tausch), which they reached just as the Bishop of Winchester was entering it from another direction. Seeing the retreating troops, he demanded to know the meaning of it. Amazed at such cowardice, he rushed before the flying soldiers, stopped them, and exhorting them to be mindful of their honor, their soul's salvation, and their God, and unfurling the standard of the Pope, he led them back to the battle. Thus it was that on the fourth of August the German army took its stand at Tausch, ready to meet the enemy. But when the Bohemians made their appearance, the heart of the Germans again failed them. Even before the battle commenced, they began to flee in all directions in the wildest confusion. In vain were all the exhortations of the cardinal; in vain did he seize the flag of the empire, and, tearing it into shreds, hurl it at the feet of the commanding princes with frightful curses and imprecations. At last, not wishing to fall himself into the hands of the heretics, he, too, was compelled to seek safety in flight. The Bohemians, pursuing the flying enemy through the forests, killed many thousands of them, and gained immense quantities of spoils. They then turned to besiege Tachov, which, although strongly fortified, was compelled to surrender in a few days. Among the prisoners taken were a number of noblemen, who, upon giving their word of honor that they would not try to escape, were allowed to be at large; but they broke their promise at the first opportunity.

After the surrender of Tachov, the army besieged the fortress of Raupov, whose owner saved himself by agreeing to help the Hussites in the siege of Pilsen.

Pilsen, as of old, defended itself so valiantly, and the fortifications were so strong, that the siege was raised ; the Hussites being content with a six-months' truce, and an agreement to hold public disputations during the Christmas holidays. The Hussites were always eager for a public disputation, and yet, as a rule, such disputations had no other effect than to confirm each party in its old opinions.

Of the two armies that were to invade Bohemia from the east and south, only the one from Silesia kept its agreement. A decisive victory was won over the Orphans at Nachod ; but when news reached the German camp of the misfortune at Tachov, nothing more was attempted, and finally this division also entered into the general truce.

The defeat of the Germans at Tachov, and the subsequent failure of the whole crusade, made a deep impression upon the whole of Christendom, and various reasons were given as the cause. Some of the princes in command were charged with treachery ; but Cardinal Henry probably found the real cause. He declared that, against the Bohemians, they did not so much need large numbers as a small, well-disciplined and well-organized army under able commanders. A Diet being called at Frankfort, that prelate laid his plans for the subjugation of Bohemia before the princes, and another crusade was immediately declared. The Pope sent a letter of condolence to the cardinal, assuring him of his sympathy, and expressing his perfect confidence in his ability to bring the next crusade to a happy issue.

THE CORVINUS CONSPIRACY.

For some time there was peace in the land, and the friends of Sigmund Corvinus embraced the opportunity to make plans to rescue that prince from his imprisonment. They held in grateful remembrance his devotion to the good of their country, and his misfortune seemed to them the more grievous since they knew not the place of his confinement nor how he fared. Having agreed to do something to rescue him, they broached the subject to some of the more zealous Hussites, and, receiving no encouragement, they turned to the Catholics. A conspiracy was formed in which it was agreed to gain possession of Prague and deliver it into the hands of Sigmund, in consideration of which he was to set the Polish prince at liberty. The plot was well laid, and doubtless would have proved successful had it not been betrayed. William Kostka, of Postupitz, one of the conspirators, could not endure the thought of delivering Prague into the hands of its arch-enemy, and so he revealed the plot to the authorities. When, therefore, the conspirators entered the city with a force of 600 cavalry, and gave the signal "Holy Peace," instead of meeting with a welcome from their friends, they were surrounded by their enemies. Seeing they were betrayed, they tried to save themselves by flight. About a hundred were slain, two hundred taken prisoners, some were drowned in trying to cross the river, and a few escaped by hiding among friends in the city. The priest Rokycan, anxious to prevent so much bloodshed, rushed among the soldiers in the thickest of the fight, and saved several lives by shielding the fugitives with his priestly robe.

To avoid similar outbreaks, the Hussites set Sig-mund Corvinus at liberty, and, furnishing him with a strong escort, allowed him to return to Poland. The nobleness of character of this prince is shown in the fact that, after receiving such treatment, he cherished no ill-will against the Bohemians; but at all times defended their cause while at home, and finally returned to them offering his services as a volunteer.

THE SIEGE OF KOLIN.

After the unfortunate event in Prague, the armies of the Taborites and the Orphans, returning from the siege of Pilsen, were most welcome, especially as they brought large quantities of military stores. It was decided to besiege the city of Kolin, the Prague army uniting with the other two for this purpose. The besiegers remained before the walls for three months and exhausted every ingenuity of war, and yet without success. Finally the citizens refused to defend it any longer, and it surrendered, the inhabitants being allowed to withdraw unmolested.

After the siege of Kolin, the three armies marched into Moravia, and, meeting with no opposition, they devastated the country as far as Hungary.

The year 1428 was fruitless of results to either side. Among the crusaders a great deal had been planned, but little carried out. Cardinal Henry having been recalled to England, the zeal of the German princes soon waxed cold.

Then, too, the tax imposed for the new crusade was so grievous that the people refused to pay it, and such part of it as was paid was retained by the princes to help to equip their own armies.

NEGOTIATIONS FOR PEACE.

In the beginning of the year 1429, Sigmund came to Pressburg, where he remained with his court for several months. In March of the same year, Prokop the Great invaded Austria, and as he was the virtual ruler of Bohemia at this time, the Moravian lords thought it a good opportunity to bring the two rulers together for the purpose of discussing the advisability of making peace.

The plan was proposed to Prokop by Menhart of Hradetz, a nobleman trusted alike by Catholics and Hussites. Prokop at once consented, but remembering Sigmund's treachery to Hus, he would not place himself in his power unless hostages were given. This request being complied with, the Hussite chief, with a retinue of two hundred distinguished men, repaired to Sigmund's court.

It seems that Sigmund at this time had a sincere desire to make peace; consequently he received the envoys with great kindness and consideration. He laid before them his legal right to the crown, his natural love for their country, and exhorted them to abjure all innovations and return to the faith of their fathers; and if they could not do so at once, they should refer the case to the Council of Basil, to be held in two years; but in the meantime they should enter into a truce with all Christian nations.

The Bohemians replied that not they, but the opposite side, had departed from the customs of the primitive Church, and that there could be no peace until the Church returned to the teachings of Christ and his disciples. As to the coming Council, should it

prove to be like that of Constance, they could not expect any justice from it.

Finally, it was agreed to hold a Diet in Prague, Sigmund promising to send delegates.

During the negotiations, the Bohemians addressed Sigmund as king, meaning thereby the King of the Romans and of Hungary; for they would not acknowledge him King of Bohemia. He bore the slight with patience; but when they presumed to advise him to accept their faith, that then they would rather have him for a king than any other prince in the world, he became angry, and called upon God to witness that he would rather die than err in faith.

As a faithful Catholic, Sigmund did all that was possible for him to do. It is singular that it never occurred to any one at this time, that the interpretation of the Scripture by the opposite side might be as correct as its own.

The proposed Diet was held at Prague, May, 1429, the discussions lasting a week. The Bohemians agreed to refer their case to the Council of Basil, if it would be composed of delegates from all Christendom; not only from Rome, but from Greece, Armenia, and Constantinople, and the authority to be the Holy Scriptures.

Such a Council as the Bohemians demanded was an unheard-of thing, except in the early Christian Church, and Rome would by no means consent to it. The Popes, as a rule, hated all Councils; how could they favor one like this?

Thus all hopes for a reconciliation came to naught, and both sides again prepared for war.

As soon as it was known that the negotiations for

peace were fruitless of results, another crusade was preparing against Bohemia. This was again to be commanded by Cardinal Henry, who sailed from England with a force of 5,000 men. But when he landed on the Continent, he received orders from the English king to go instead to the aid of the English in France. He was exceedingly reluctant to give up the crusade; but his troops were glad to go, and doubtless would have deserted his standard had he refused to obey the order. The cardinal's failure to come to their assistance so discouraged the German princes, that nothing was accomplished that year.

The Bohemians, however, were not idle. Led by Prokop the Great, they invaded Lusatia, took several towns, and returned home with immense spoils. Another plundering expedition was made the same year by the united armies of the Taborites, Pragites, and Orphans. The army numbered 40,000 infantry, 4,000 cavalry and 2,500 wagons. They marched northward to revenge themselves upon the Germans in those countries, who had shown themselves to be their most bitter enemies. Their object was not conquest, but to harass the enemy according to the principle adopted at the beginning of their taking the offensive—"Vexatio dat intellectum." At Leipsic a large army, commanded by the Margrave of Brandenburg, prepared to obstruct their march. The Hussites, placing their carts in order, went to meet the enemy. There was some skirmishing; but the great battle that both sides expected never took place, and the Hussites continued their plundering expedition. An old chronicler says: "Then the Bohemians divided, so that each division with its wagons marched independently of the other, and the five

armies made terrible destruction, and in all these German lands there was no one that dared oppose their march."

When they came to the town of Plavna, they decided to spare the inhabitants, because the town was subject to one of the lords of Pilsen. But being in want of certain provisions, they sent a few men under a flag of truce to obtain them. But no sooner did the people get sight of the abhorred heretics than they raised a riot, attacked the men, and murdered them to a man. The Hussites then fell upon the town, and put all the people to the sword.

The fate of the people of Plavna made the inhabitants of other towns tremble with fear. Wherever the Hussite army appeared, they either fled or surrendered, accepting such terms as the enemy offered.

A curious fate befell the city of Bamberg. At the approach of the Hussites, the people immediately prepared to leave the city, cursing the chapter and the bishop who had prevented them from making fortifications. Some 500 of the fugitives remained near the city, and when, after waiting for several days, no Hussites made their appearance, they returned to the deserted city and plundered it worse than the enemy would have been likely to do.

At last the tide of devastation and misery was stemmed by the exertions of Frederick, the Elector of Brandenburg. He had just returned from the Imperial Diet held at Pressburg, and, obtaining a safe-conduct, immediately repaired to the camp of the Hussites to try to make a treaty with them. He was joined by envoys from the cities of Bamberg, Wurzburg, Nuremberg, and by John, the Duke of Bavaria. A truce

of six months was agreed upon, and the cities redeemed themselves from further molestation by paying the Hussites 50,000 Rhine guilders. A public disputation was also to be held at Nuremburg, with the understanding that what was there proved from Scripture was to be accepted by both sides. Owing to the interference of the Pope, this disputation was never held.

The Bohemians now prepared to return home. The Elector Frederick was so pleased with the leaders that he escorted them with his retinue as far as the frontier, exchanging many civilities with them, which made him to be suspected of heresy.

As Eger had not joined in the agreement made, when the Hussites came near they began to devastate the country, upon which the citizens saved their city by paying 1,700 guilders.

A part of the army returned to Prague as early as February; but the rest were delayed many days on account of the slow progress of the wagons heavily laden with spoils. It was said that it required six to twelve horses to haul a wagon, and that then they were obliged to move slowly. In Palacký is found the following remark: "Never before had the Bohemians made such a glorious expedition into Germany, nor is there any record that any one ever heard of such a thing. Had they been ambitious like the early Čechs, they might have marched even to the Rhine, and conquered many lands; but taking much booty, and enriching themselves with gold, they returned to Bohemia."

THE FIFTH AND LAST CRUSADE AGAINST BOHEMIA.

(1430-1431.)

The great expedition of the Bohemians into the German States as far as Leipsic and Nuremberg had

the effect of drawing the attention of all Europe to Bohemia. The people asked: "What is this nation that, turning out of the beaten path, can not be brought back by the united efforts of the Pope and so many princes, nor humbled and rendered harmless? Why does it struggle against established customs? What is its faith, and what does it demand?"

During the ten years of the war, the Bohemians had sent numerous manifestoes to the various European nations in which they vindicated their actions, throwing the blame of the storms and disorders upon the hierarchy of Rome; and as the war continued, these documents were read with more and more interest, and produced an effect that was by no means desirable. Thus, in France, there were various disturbances; sects were formed who took their confession of faith from these manifestoes. Even in Spain the people began to question the propriety of all the lands being held by the clergy and nobility, and the common people being treated little better than slaves. Such questions were dangerous to established customs; and to this was added another especially dangerous to the Church—if the cause of the Bohemians was not just, why did God permit them to be so uniformly successful? Indeed, in course of time, the term heretic lost much of its stigma. The Bohemians were unquestionably heretics; and yet they seemed to enjoy the favor of Heaven even more than some of the faithful. These were some of the moral gains; but, on the other hand, there were losses that counterbalanced them. The Bohemian nation, although victorious, could not escape the demoralization incident to a long war. On every side could be seen villages and towns broken down, castles and for-

tresses in ruins, the owners being either murdered or wandering about the country homeless. The fields remained untilled, the estates were neglected, and the trade with other nations was entirely cut off. In addition to this, the moral deterioration was so great that all peaceful occupations and arts were neglected, people finding it easier to depend upon plundering their enemies for providing themselves with the necessities of life than upon the labor of their hands.

The army, too, lost its character; the godliness and integrity common in the time of Žižka were now almost unknown. Whenever there was a call to arms, the peasants and small tradesmen hid themselves, and when compelled to enlist, deserted at the first opportunity. The deficiency was made up by volunteers from other lands, especially from Russia and Poland; but there were also some Germans and other nationalities represented. Indeed, among the Taborites and Orphans was found the refuse of all lands and nations. These disadvantages were made up by the superior generalship of the commanders, and the experience gained in a long and continuous war.

THE RESULT OF THE HUSSITE SUCCESS.

The continued success of the Bohemians led many princes to enter into feudal relations with Prokop the Great, although they had been strictly forbidden by the Church to form any alliances with the heretics.

This state of affairs greatly disturbed the hierarchy of Rome; for the Pope and cardinals saw that Hussitism and Rome were two forces that could not exist side by side; for should the former prosper, the latter must in the same proportion decline. Therefore the

Pope made every effort to establish peace among the various European princes and unite them in another expedition against Bohemia.

THE COUNCIL OF BASIL.

The people now began to look with much hope to the Council of Basil, that had been appointed to be called March 3, 1431. A general opinion prevailed that mild measures would surely accomplish what physical force could not. And many of the people believed that the Bohemians erred in faith through ignorance, and that as soon as they were properly instructed, they would gladly return into the bosom of the true Church. It is needless to remark that the Bohemians themselves cherished no such ideas, nor did the Pope, Martin V. In fact, he held all Councils in abhorrence, since they had invariably infringed upon the rights of the Popes, and as far as it lay in his power, he determined to prevent or postpone the calling of the proposed Council. All at once, he was obliged to give up this opposition, and that in a very unexpected manner. When, on November 8, 1430, the city of Rome was celebrating the promotion of three prelates to the chairs of cardinals, among them the renowned Julian Cesarini, a strange manifesto was found nailed upon the principal door of the Vatican. This manifesto purported to be written by "two of the most enlightened princes of Christendom," urgently demanded the calling of the Council, and declared that since the Pope and cardinals opposed this they were to be regarded the friends of heretics, and princes and subjects alike were to refuse them obedience.

It was never discovered who the authors of this document were, but it was generally supposed that Frederick of Brandenburg and Albert of Austria were the guilty parties. Although anonymous, the manifesto made a deep impression upon the higher clergy of Rome, who forthwith began to make preparations for the calling of the Council, although Pope Martin still seemed reluctant to do so. He spared no pains to push the preparations for the crusade, still hoping that the difficulty would be settled by means of the sword.

Pope Martin was not only a great ecclesiastic, but a shrewd politician, and from past experience he knew that the Bohemians would never submit to the mere dictum of the Papal See; and to make concessions would but weaken the power of the Church. He therefore placed his most able prelate, the Cardinal Julian, at the head of the coming crusade, sending him to Germany to rally all the princes under his banner. Giving him almost unlimited powers, he urged him with the most earnest protestations to go out and persuade both prince and peasant to join the crusade personally, or further the cause with their contributions, abundant indulgences being promised as a reward.

But ere he could see the fruits of his labors, Pope Martin died. It is a most significant fact, speaking volumes in itself, that this Pope, so exceedingly zealous in putting down heresy, and so importunate in begging all Christians to contribute their mites for the undertaking, died leaving a fortune of five millions of florins, which he bequeathed—not to the cause—but to his nephew, the Prince of Salerno.

PREPARATIONS FOR THE CRUSADE.

After the death of Pope Martin, a Diet was held at Nuremberg, in which most of the German princes were present. The plan of the coming campaign was discussed and agreed upon, and Cardinal Julian was requested to travel from State to State to rouse the people to greater enthusiasm. His efforts were crowned with so much success that in a moment of joyous anticipation he wrote to King Sigmund, asking him to assign to him some little province in Bohemia. And yet at the very eve of the campaign, whether to conciliate the Bohemians or put them off their guard, he sent them the following letter :

"I, Cardinal Julian, cherish in my heart no more ardent desire than that the kingdom of Bohemia should return into the unity of the Church ; therefore, I come bringing the land, not destruction, but good-will and peace, the renewal of good old customs that had fallen into neglect, and the building up of the honor and glory of God. Therefore, let the people meet me with confidence ; for know that whoever will return into the bosom of the Church will be received as a brother, and the joy at his conversion will be as great as at the return of the prodigal in the Scripture. We find no pleasure in going to war with you, but we can not stand by idly while godliness languishes, churches are destroyed, pictures of saints desecrated, and the holy eucharist trampled under foot. Do not be deceived that a few men, casting aside all authority and law, are wiser than the whole Christian Church. What can soldiers, citizens, and peasants teach you ? Do they understand the Word of God better than the

doctors of the university? Therefore, return to the Church with confidence; you will find not only forgiveness and grace, but loving favor, such as a child can expect from its mother.

"May our Lord and Savior, who redeemed us with his precious blood, grant you Bohemians the heart to join us in faith for the salvation of your souls and the peace and honor of the kingdom of Bohemia!"

Many copies of this manifesto were sent over the country, but proved fruitless of results. The active preparations for war on the part of the German princes convinced the Bohemians of the emptiness of all these phrases. They therefore were not at all shaken in their purpose, and made vigorous preparations for the coming tempest.

THE GREAT DAY AT DOMAZLITZ (TAUS).

The decisive action in the last crusade against Bohemia took place at Domazlitz, August 14, 1431.

The Bohemian armies—the Pragites, Taborites, and Orphans—were united under the command of Prokop the Great, and numbered about 50,000 infantry, 5,000 cavalry, and 3,000 war-wagons. The crusaders, under the command of Cardinal Julian, had 90,000 infantry, 40,000 cavalry, and also many wagons.

The Bohemian army awaited the enemy in the vicinity of Pilsen; but the latter not appearing, they went out to meet them to the Bavarian frontier. As they still failed to make their appearance, the Bohemians, fearing they might get out of provisions, sent the divisions in all directions to supply this want.

This unexpected return of the troops deceived the enemy. It was taken for a retreat caused by dissen-

sions in the camp, and the crusaders at once determined to take advantage of it. Arriving at Tachov, August 1st, and seeing the Bohemians unprepared for battle, Cardinal Julian insisted that battle be given without delay; but his counsel was overruled by the other commanders, who declared that the soldiers were too wearied with their march, and therefore that the battle had better be postponed to the following day. The next morning they found the walls of Tachov repaired, and the garrison ready for battle, consequently the siege was given up. The enemy then turned to Brod, and taking the village, all the inhabitants were put to the sword. These devastations were continued for some time, the people being murdered without mercy, regardless of the fact that many of them had never accepted the chalice. Seeing how these actions harmonized with Cardinal Julian's manifesto, the Bohemians understood what they had to expect, should they be defeated.

August 7th, the crusaders separated their army into three divisions—the first under the Duke of Saxony, the second under the Margrave of Brandenburg, and the third under the Duke of Bavaria. The following day they marched to Domazlitz.

The Bohemian commanders hearing of the coming of the enemy, hastened to bring the various divisions together, and, August 14th, the whole army also marched to Domazlitz. "It was about three o'clock in the afternoon when the report spread in the camp of the crusaders that the Hussites were approaching, and the battle beginning; and, although they could not yet be seen, being fully a mile distant, the Germans heard the rumbling of their wagons, and also the

sound of the fearful war song, 'Ye Warriors of the Lord,' and their hearts were filled with a strange fear. Cardinal Julian, accompanied by the Duke of Saxony, ascended a certain elevation that commanded a view of the whole army, and immediately sent word to the commander-in-chief that this hill should be occupied without delay. Suddenly he perceived that the German camp was in a strange motion, the soldiers running hither and thither, the noise and confusion growing apace, the wagons dragged out of the lines and going in opposite directions, the riders scattering in small bands, trying to outride each other, but all tending backwards and not toward the enemy. 'What is the meaning of this!' exclaimed the cardinal in terror. 'Why do they fling the provisions out of the wagons?' But ere he could recover from his amazement, news came from the Margrave of Brandenburg that all the soldiers had taken to flight, and that it was not possible to restrain them. At the same time he was urged to be mindful of his own safety, and hasten to the woods, ere it should be too late. And truly the flight now became general. On all sides were to be seen wagons driven without any order, the drivers lightening them by hurling out the provisions by the wayside. Almost stunned by this unexpected turn of affairs, Cardinal Julian was carried away by the flight of the others, until he found himself at the entrance to the woods. Here he recollected himself, and finally succeeded in making one of the divisions take a stand, at least to cover the flight of the others. But the Bohemians, falling upon them, killed a large number, and the unfortunate cardinal, whose soldiers suffered the most, found himself in great danger, not

so much from the Bohemians as from the crusaders, who were exceedingly enraged against him, because they thought he was the cause of all their misfortune. The Bishop of Wurzburg saved him by taking him among his own troops, where, dressed as a private, he rode a whole day and night without stopping to partake either of food or drink. The panic among the troops was so great that some who were citizens of Nuremberg, upon returning to that city, in the confusion of their minds, sought accommodations at the public inns, forgetting that they had homes in the city. The Bohemians remained for the whole night among the abandoned wagons, taking spoils and drinking wine from the large casks. The next morning many prisoners were taken of soldiers who had hidden themselves among the branches of the trees. Of the 4,000 wagons, hardly 300 found their way back to Germany; consequently the spoils the Bohemians obtained were very great—beautiful flags and banners, all manner of arms, money, gold and silver utensils, costly robes, powder, and provisions; and what gave them special pleasure was the Pope's bull calling out the crusade, and Cardinal Julian's golden crucifix, his hat and robe. These last trophies were kept in Domazlitz for about two hundred years."

Hearing of the disaster at Domazlitz, the other armies of the crusaders became discouraged, and left the country without attempting anything.

While the victory was celebrated in Prague, Prokop the Great hastened into Silesia, where the Germans were besieging some towns. Disposing of them quickly, he marched into Moravia, where Albert of Austria was committing fearful depredations. No de-

cisive battle was fought, but the enemy was pursued as far as the Danube.

“ Thus in a short time, the country was freed from all enemies, and flags with pictures of the sacred chalice, the symbol of domestic unity and enthusiasm, floated without hindrance on all the public buildings, to the great joy and comfort of its worshipers and fear to its enemies.”

THE COUNCIL OF BASIL.

The victory at Domazlitz was in its results the most important action of the Hussite wars. After twelve years of continuous struggle, Europe found herself as far from conquering Bohemia as at the beginning of the war. Indeed, the nations saw that they had not even succeeded in impoverishing the country, but rather had enriched it, and, what grieved them sore, had carried into it many precious articles that could never be replaced. After the battle of Domazlitz, the general opinion prevailed that peace must be had at all costs. The Bohemians had desired this at all times, but could not accept it with the conditions imposed; now the European nations were ready to treat with them as with equals, giving their demands a proper consideration.

Nor was this all; the European nations were brought to a new line of thought, which, without the struggle, would not have come into existence. This was the awakening of the spirit of progress and reform in the Church. The abuses in the Church were indeed great and apparent to all; but no one dared propose any radical remedy. When the news of the defeat at Domazlitz reached the prelates gathered at Basil, it

filled them with consternation; for they recognized in it the finger of God, punishing them for their neglect of the work of reform that for so many years had been needed and desired. They therefore determined to go to work with earnestness to redeem, as far as possible, what had been lost by their neglect.

The three questions that the Council determined to discuss and settle were—(1) The extermination of heresy; (2) Reform of the Church in head and members; (3) How to bring peace among the nations of Europe.

Early in the session, the Council sent a letter to the Bohemians, urging them to send their delegates, and assuring them of the sincere desire of the fathers to enter into some peaceful agreement with them. Among other things, is found the following:

“We have heard that you often complained that you could get no free hearing, such as you desired. The cause of this complaint is now removed; now you shall have opportunity to have such a hearing as you yourself desire. The Holy Ghost himself will be the highest judge. He shall determine what is to be believed and held in the Church. . . . We beg you to send to us from your midst, men upon whom rests the Spirit of God in hope—sober, God-fearing men, lowly of heart, desirous of peace, and seeking not their own good, but that of the Church of Christ. And may the Lord give you and all Christians peace in this world, and eternal life in the next! Amen.”

Although the Council expressed such a willingness to give the Bohemians a fair hearing, the fathers did not take into consideration that there were three religious sects in Bohemia, differing from each other even more than the Church of Rome differed from

them. The Bohemians, however, realized this fully, and before giving any reply to the Council, called a meeting of delegates from the sects to decide on what should be demanded from the Council.

The Orphans, being more moderate than the Taborites, were willing to come to some agreement; but the Taborites, as usual, looked upon all compromises as the "snares of the devil." To vindicate their want of tractability, they sent a manifesto to the German nations, in which were the following statements: "We are surprised that you, Germans, place so much faith in the Pope and his priests, who grant you pernicious indulgences, authorizing you to murder us. These indulgences are a fraud and a deceit, and whoever puts his trust in them shall perish soul and body. Whoever can redeem his brother from death, and neglects to do so, is guilty of that brother's death. If, then, the Pope can save people from sin and damnation, then nobody will be lost; and if he neglects to do so, he himself destroys all that are lost. The priests are like the devil when he tempted Christ—promising him the whole world, when it did not belong to him. Do not believe the priests when they tell you that it is not proper for laics to discuss religious questions. They say this from fear, lest they be shamed in their ignorance. True faith is of such a character that the more it is opposed, the stronger it grows."

This manifesto was found nailed to the door of the City Hall in Basil. Being in the German language, the fathers of the Council had it translated into Latin, and then issued a letter which they regarded as an answer to the charges of the manifesto.

After much negotiation, the three sects in Bohemia

agreed to go to the Council, but discuss nothing whatever until they were granted the "Four Articles of Prague." A Diet was held in Eger, where delegates from the Council met those from Bohemia, and it was decided upon what terms the Bohemians should be received in Basil. It was also decided that, in all religious questions, the authority should be the Holy Scripture, the practice of the primitive Church, and the decisions of Church Councils.

The Bohemian deputation, numbering some three hundred persons, started for Basil, December 6, 1431. Among the lay delegates were William Kostka of Postupitz, and six other men of eminence. The delegates from the Churches were John Rokycan, Peter Payne, Prokop the Great, Nicholas of Pelhram, Ulric of Znoima, and three others.

On their way they were received with every mark of honor; the Council, and especially Cardinal Julian, being determined to win their good-will even before they reached Basil. The crafty prelate knew beforehand that the Council would never accede to their demands, and he imagined that the delegates, blinded by the favors received, would finally cease from demanding the liberties purchased by so much bloodshed and suffering. In this he was mistaken; for men made of such stern stuff as Prokop the Great, Payne, and Rokycan, could not be turned from their purpose by any such blandishments.

When the delegation was approaching Basil, it was decided to finish the journey by water; and as it had been expected to come by land, it reached the city before the inhabitants were aware of it; but the news spread as if by magic, and the aldermen went

out to welcome the new-comers ere they could get ashore. The people rushed out to see the strange men. Æneas Silvius writes: "The women, children, and servants crowded into the windows, pointing out this one and that one. They wondered at the strange costumes, the style of dress never seen before, at their terrible countenances and wild eyes, saying that what they had heard of them was probably true. Nevertheless, the attention of all was riveted upon a certain Prokop; for they said that it was he who had carried on so many wars, and won so many victories over the faithful, had taken and destroyed so many cities, brought to ruin so many thousands of people—a man equally feared by friend and foe, since he was a general, bold invincible, unfailing in labors, and fearless in perils."

PROCEEDINGS OF THE COUNCIL.

Cardinal Julian opened the session with an impressive address, which was followed by a discourse by John Rokycan on the text, "Where is he that is born King of the Jews?" The speaker said they came to Basil to seek Christ—Christianity—as it was taught in the primitive Church. Then followed discussions that lasted for several days. Rokycan defended the Utraquist doctrine; Ulric of Znoima, the free preaching of the Word of God; Peter Payne spoke against the secular power of the clergy; and Nicholas of Pelhram advocated the punishment by secular authorities of crimes committed by the clergy. Rokycan, speaking with great eloquence and moderation, was listened to with breathless attention. The others, and especially Peter Payne, did not possess so much self-restraint, and consequently indulged in bitter invective against the

Council of Constance. The fathers drew up twenty-eight articles, containing erroneous doctrines, and asked the Bohemian delegates to explain their position in regard to these; but they would enter into no discussion until a decision had been made in regard to the "Four Articles."

The Council resorted to all sorts of subterfuges to induce the delegates to submit to the Council unconditionally, "since it was under the direct guidance of the Holy Ghost;" but remembering the Council of Constance, that likewise claimed to be under the guidance of the Holy Ghost, and yet had not scrupled to murder their beloved Hus, they gave little heed to this assumption, and continued to insist upon Scriptural proofs.

It seems that Pope Eugene, the successor of Pope Martin, himself did not have much faith in the infallibility of the Council, for he issued two bulls trying to dissolve it. This, however, was prevented by both King Sigmund and Cardinal Julian.

When the Bohemian delegates would not consent to submit to the dictum of the Council, Cardinal Julian said: "We say the Church is with us; you, that it is with you. Let us become united and be one body; then there will be no question as to where the Church is. The Pope has now joined us, the emperor is with us, as well as many princes; therefore join us, and the unity will be complete."

The Council would make no concessions; the Bohemians, as delegates, could not; consequently it was decided to refer the matter to a Diet to be held in Prague. With many expressions of friendly regard from both sides, the delegates prepared to return

home. Just before leaving the Council chamber, Prokop the Great asked leave to speak. He said that he had noticed that some members of the Council imagined that he had, with his own hands, put people to death. He declared that for the whole world he would not be guilty of a falsehood, and that he could say with truth that he had never shed a drop of human blood, much less put any one to death. He did not deny that he had been the commander in many battles where large numbers of people had perished, but that he could not be blamed for this, since he had repeatedly urged the Pope and cardinals to make peace and work for reform in the Church. Now that the Council was called, he implored it to make those reforms that the nations were longing for with sighs and tears. He also exhorted the fathers to cease persecuting people who did not agree with them in doctrines; for example, such as the Waldenses, who, although poor, were good and honest people.

April 14th, the Bohemians started for home, accompanied by the delegates that the Council sent to represent it in the Diet to be held in Prague.

The respect shown the Bohemian nation by an assembly composed of representatives of all the nations in Christendom, is one of the most noteworthy events in history. Never before had Bohemia been so honored and so feared, and never before did Pope, prelate, and priest resort to so much artifice to win her favor and friendship. The reign of Charles IV is regarded as the "Golden Age" of Bohemian history; and yet, to secure the favor of the Church and keep peace, Charles IV was obliged to resort to all these artifices that now the Church employed to secure the favor—

not of some great ruler, nor of the powerful noblemen who counted their blue blood far superior to that of the peasants—but of the common people, upon whose claims they had for ages looked with scorn. The movement known as Hussitism was the movement of democracy and progress, and the victory gained was the victory of democracy and progress over aristocracy and ecclesiastical despotism. As far as the demands of the Bohemians were concerned, 't is true they gained but little, and that little was finally wrested from them; but in considering how Bohemia was treated at the Council of Constance when she had a legitimate ruler upon the throne, and how she was treated now, when all was done in the name of the people, one must acknowledge that some tremendous force must have been brought to bear against that most despotic of despotic governments, the hierarchy of Rome; and, in looking over the long years of war, one sees that this power was the intelligence and strength of character of the common people. In the latter years of the war, there is almost no mention of the nobility. At the beginning, we remember how the people rejoiced when so great a noble as Čenek of Wartenberg espoused their cause, yet he proved unstable, treacherous, and incapable. The victory was won by the people, and for the people; and although it may be said that it came a century too soon, it will forever remain a glorious illustration that the strength of a nation lies in its middle classes.

THE PRAGUE DIET.

The Diet at Prague met June 12, 1433. Rokycan delivered the opening address, and welcomed the Basil

delegates. The sessions were prolonged many days, since it seemed next to impossible to come to some agreement. During one of the debates the Basil delegate charged the Bohemians with spreading their doctrines by means of fire and sword, to which Prokop the Great replied:

“As to wars, may God Almighty bear me witness, not we, but your side, began the war by raising against us the bloody cross. You devastated our country with fire and sword in the most frightful manner; we, however, with God's help, were able to withstand this unjust oppression, and will withstand it still further until peace is secured by the acknowledgment of those blessed truths contained in the ‘Four Articles.’ We further would inform your honor that we hold in abhorrence the evils incident to war, and that we reprove those who are guilty of them; and we carry the burden of war only because we desire such a peace as shall secure unity in the Church, reform in morals, and all the blessings that you yourself desire to attain.”

The Basil delegates, not succeeding in bending the Diet to their wishes, resorted to intrigue. Calling a secret meeting of nobles, they represented to them how unbecoming it was that they, the rightful rulers of the kingdom, were so degraded that they were compelled to obey persons who were not even worthy to be their servants; and they showed them that this state of affairs must continue unless they found help in peace and unity with the Church when the old condition would be restored. From that time on, the noblemen spared no pains to induce the Diet to come to some agreement with the Church. Finally it was agreed that the “Four Articles,” with some limitations, would

be granted, and the delegates returned to Basil, much disappointed that they could not secure a truce during the session of the Council, this being violently opposed by Prokop the Great, who held firmly to the principle "Vexatio dat intellectum." He declared that not until the "Four Articles" were settled "according to God" could they have peace, true and uncorrupted, with all Christendom.

When the delegates gave their report to the Council at Basil, the fathers held several secret sessions so as to avoid all interference from the Pope, and finally agreed to grant all the Bohemians had asked. This, however, did not settle the difficulty. Questions immediately arose in regard to the method of taking the communion, the Bohemians insisting that the Utraquist way be introduced into all the Churches. This the Council refused to grant, the negotiations were broken off, and it seemed that all was lost.

THE NOBLEMEN'S LEAGUE.

While the negotiations between the people and the Council of Basil were going on, there were other forces at work, not only to secure peace at all costs, but to restore the power of the nobility. In 1433 the emperor secured the services of Sir Ulric of Rosenberg, then the most powerful Catholic noble, who, in consideration of receiving from that ruler several fortresses, agreed to do all in his power to help to establish him upon the throne of Bohemia. Through the efforts of this noble, and many other disaffected ones, a league was formed between the Catholic and Calixtine nobles, whose aim was to secure peace at all costs, and restore the nobility to its old position in the State. These

nobles proceeded in their plans with so much caution that the people suspected nothing; and even Prokop the Great gave his consent, when it was decided to place the government of the land into the hands of Ales of Risenberg, a rather poor nobleman, but who, for that very reason, so much better answered the purpose of the league. When the league felt quite strong, being joined by most of the nobles, as well as by the Prague citizens of the Old Town, they issued a proclamation inviting all the other States to join them for the peace and order of the realm, and declaring public enemies those who refused to do so. This was a virtual declaration of war against the Taborites, who at once prepared to meet this domestic enemy.

The first battle was fought at New Town in Prague, where the Taborites had many adherents; but, although they defended themselves with much vigor, they were defeated and compelled to leave the city.

THE BATTLE OF LIPAN.

(May 30, 1434.)

When Prokop the Great left Prague with his army, he marched to Kolin, where he was joined by the army of the Orphans. The two armies then turned back to meet the army of the nobles that had marched against them from Prague. They met them near the village of Lipan, about four German miles from Prague; and here was fought one of the saddest, most bloody, and unfortunate battles in the whole Hussite war. It was the final struggle between Catholicism and feudalism on the one side, and Protestantism and democracy on the other,

On one side stood almost all the noblemen of the

country, both Catholic and Calixtine, having an army of 25,000 men; on the other, the Taborites and Orphans, with an army of 18,000, commanded by Prokop the Great, Prokop the Small, Capek, and others.

The armies, taking their stand near the village of Lipan, arranged their wagon fortifications, and waited each the attack of the other; for it seemed that the victory would be with the side that succeeded in beguiling the other out of its fortifications. The Taborites, impatient in waiting so long, began the attack. When the shooting had continued for some time, the commander of the army of the nobles resorted to a stratagem. His troops were ordered to retreat. The cry arose, "They run, they run!" The Taborites rushed upon what they supposed to be the flying enemy, got into ambush, and were cut to pieces, this disaster turning the tide of the battle. Then commenced a frightful slaughter that lasted for a whole day and night; no quarter was given, and the work of butchery did not cease until only about 700 men were left of the Taborite army. These were shut up in barns, and burned alive. Capek, who fled with his division almost before the battle began, was for a long time regarded as a traitor.

Among the fallen were both the Prokops, both of whom fell like common soldiers. Their bodies were not even sought out and honored with a separate burial. The ungrateful noblemen did not think it worth while to seek out the remains of one who so many times had saved their country from destruction.

With the defeat at Lipan, the power of the Taborites was forever broken, and with them the power of

the people. From that time on, the nobility again came in the ascendancy, and governed the affairs of the realm. Still the strength and influence of the people continued to be felt for many years, the government paying some regard to their wishes.

CONTINUATION OF THE NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE
COUNCIL OF BASIL.

The Taborites having been put out of the way, the negotiations with the Council were resumed through the intervention of Sigmund, who now hoped to bring them to a successful issue. Yet this was by no means so easy as might have been thought. Such great changes had taken place in Bohemia during the war, not only in belief, but also in Church service, that it was very difficult for the Council to settle the trouble, especially as the Bohemians held the new practices as a right, asking of the Church merely their confirmation. On one occasion at the Diet in Brünn, Rokycan exclaimed: "It seems that your whole object is to kindle dissensions among us, from which we suffer more than before you came! How can it be true that you desire peace and unity? What we ask is nothing difficult; and it is the more amazing that while you constantly declare you wish to do all you can for us, you do nothing. We want an archbishop who shall be named by our king, and elected by the people and clergy. This is done in Hungary, why may it not be done in Bohemia? We ask that foreigners do not judge us, nor give away our ecclesiastical benefices; this, too, is not unreasonable, and good for the peace and unity of the kingdom. See to it that communion in both kinds be regarded lawful in the towns where it is al-

ready the custom, and we will be at peace. But we do not ask it as though we could not have it without your permission, for it is already given us by God; but we ask it in behalf of peace and unity. If you do not grant it, may God be with you; for with us his grace and presence shall remain."

After this speech, the Bohemian delegates left the hall, and never again could they be induced to enter it, Emperor Sigmund himself being obliged to act as mediator between them and the delegates of the Council. At last even he lost all patience, and cried out: "By the Living God, some persons seem determined that I shall never enter into my inheritance; but I shall enter it, and still die a good Catholic. What, indeed, is this Council of Basil? What has it accomplished? If it can not bring peace to Bohemia, it will come to naught, like other Councils!" Seeing that the discussions led to no practical results, Sigmund himself made a treaty with the Bohemians, wherein he agreed to secure for them what they demanded of the Council, and never again to wage war against them; they, in turn, accepting him as their lawful king. This was July 6, 1435. A year from this a Diet was held at Iglau, where Sigmund was formally proclaimed King of Bohemia. The following year he succeeded in obtaining from the Council some concessions for the Bohemians. "The Four Articles" were granted with some limitations, and various regulations were made for the government of the reorganized Church, all of which was known by the name of the *Compactata*.

CHAPTER VI.

FROM SIGMUND TO FERDINAND I, OR TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE HAPSBURG DYNASTY.

THE REIGN OF SIGMUND.

SIGMUND was sixty-eight years of age, when, after a struggle of seventeen years, he finally ascended the throne of his fathers.

As the *Compactata* was not yet confirmed by the Council, there was much confusion in the country; nor was this removed when, a year later, the delegates brought the news of its confirmation to Bohemia. There were great rejoicings in the country, but, as will be seen later, these rejoicings were premature. Sigmund was a bigoted Catholic and a dishonest character; and although he made many plausible promises when he had the crown to gain, the prize once in his possession, he made little effort to keep them. Among other things, he agreed to see to it that Rokycan was confirmed by the Pope in his office of Archbishop of Bohemia. He did send letters to Rome urging the Pope to grant the confirmation; but at the same time he sent a secret message wherein the Pope was asked to delay the matter, that perhaps the Bohemians themselves would help them out of the difficulty by murdering Rokycan. And, again, although he had promised to have his counselors composed partly of Calixtines and partly of Catholics, he evaded this promise by choosing only those who were very lukewarm in

their professions and the avowed enemies of Rokycan. Whenever it was possible, Catholic instead of Calixtine priests were placed in positions, and thus gradually the Protestant party was weakened, and the Catholic strengthened.

SIGMUND AND THE TABORITES.

The power of the Taborites as a military organization was broken by the defeat at Lipan; but there still remained many people who were as devoted to their teachings as in the days of Žižka. When Sigmund was accepted King of Bohemia, it became a grave question with them whether they ought to render him obedience, or still continue to hold themselves aloof. When Sigmund was on his way to Iglau, he met Frederick, one of their chief priests, and held a long discussion with him; but the amiability he showed, instead of immediately winning the Taborites, made them suspicious; but finally they decided to make a treaty with him. Æneas Silvius speaks of them thus: "And yet those sacrilegious and most rascally people, whom the Emperor Sigmund ought to have exterminated, or relegated to the ends of the world to dig and break stones, received from him several rights and immunities, being subject only to a small tax, which was an act both disgraceful and injurious to the kingdom, since as a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump, so the dregs of these people have corrupted the whole nation." This was what was done with the more moderate Taborites, but their warriors met with quite a different fate. By fair promises Sigmund induced thousands of them to enlist into the army then preparing to go against the Turks, and it

is needless to add that they never again returned. A still sadder fate was reserved for one of their brave leaders, Rohac of Dub, and his trusted warriors. Not approving of the alliance made with Sigmund, he and his followers left Tabor, and fortified themselves upon an elevation near Kuttenberg, which they called Mount Zion.

The emperor sent a strong force under Hynce Ptaček to take this fortress and humble these rebellious subjects. The place was so well fortified, and the approach to it so difficult, that Ptaček spent four months before it, exhausting every ingenuity of war. When it was finally taken, the garrison fought desperately, preferring to die rather than to be taken prisoners. Nevertheless, the leader, with fifty-two men, was taken, and sent to Prague to be tried. When Sigmund heard of the capture of Rohac, he was so rejoiced that he ordered all the bells of the city to be rung. A horrible fate was reserved for the unfortunate prisoners. After suffering fearful tortures, they were all hanged upon a gallows put up for the occasion. Rohac, as their leader, was dressed in a lordly robe, had a gold belt put around his waist, and was hanged upon a golden chain, a little higher than the others. Thus Sigmund added to his barbarous cruelty, shameful mockery, bringing upon himself the contempt and hatred of a large number of his subjects, who, for a long time after, could not speak of the unfortunate victims without tears.

King Sigmund doubtless imagined that by this signal punishment he would strike terror into the hearts of his subjects, and thus crush at one blow all further opposition to his government; but in this he

was greatly mistaken. New storms arose. A large number of noblemen entered into a conspiracy against him, and war broke out in several places at the same time. Nor was this all. At the very time he ordered the execution of Rohac and his men, he was seized with "sacer ignis" in his toe, and, after enduring extreme agony, was obliged to have it amputated. Other diseases came on, and to this was added domestic trouble. His wife, Barbara, plotted against him, aiming to secure the throne for her nephew. Sigmund had determined that his successor should be his son-in-law, Albert of Austria; therefore he determined to resign the government into his hands. He now left Prague, determined to meet Albert and Elizabeth, and establish them upon the throne. "Some followed him from the city with sorrow, but others rejoiced, hoping he might never return."

When the party reached Znoima, the emperor called the Hungarian and Bohemian lords of that city to him, and commended to their favor the royal heirs. This duty done, he grew rapidly worse, and, knowing that his end was approaching, he resolved to die like a king. Being dressed in his imperial robes, his crown upon his head, he had mass served before him; and as soon as this was done, he had his burial robes put upon him, and so died, December 9, 1437.

Æneas Silvius thus characterizes Sigmund: "He had a fine figure, bright eyes, a broad forehead, florid complexion, a long and full beard. He desired to accomplish great things, but was unstable in mind; he enjoyed jests, and was very fond of wine; he was ardent in desire, being guilty of thousands of adulteries; prone to anger, but easily pacified; generous, but still

promising far more than he ever fulfilled. Indeed, he was guilty of innumerable deceptions."

THE REIGN OF ALBERT.

Although Sigmund had done all in his power to secure the succession to his son-in-law, the Bohemians would not accept him without some further negotiations. Knowing how strong a Catholic he was, they feared that, like his father-in-law, he would try to evade the keeping of the provisions of the *Compactata*. Moreover, he was so repulsive in person, so rough in manner, that he never won the love of his subjects. There was, however, one thing in his favor—he was more just than Sigmund, and more apt to keep a promise. The nobility were ready to accept Albert without any delay; but the popular party, led by Hynce Ptaček, made such a strong opposition, that the nobles, fearing a revolution, agreed to draw up certain articles for Albert to sign before he should be accepted King of Bohemia. According to this agreement, Albert promised to stand faithfully by the *Compactata*, to keep all the promises made by his predecessor, as well as all the good old laws and customs of the realm as they had existed under Charles IV and his son Václav.

As Albert had gone to Hungary to obtain possession of his throne in that country, it was some time before all the negotiations could be completed, so that it was not till June 8, 1438, that he was formally accepted King of Bohemia. In the meantime he had also been chosen by the electors King of the Romans.

Although so much precaution had been taken in choosing the new ruler, his reign lasted hardly a year.

Going on an expedition against the Turks, who began to invade Hungary, he was taken ill, and died October 27, 1439.

In the German States, Albert was greatly beloved. At the news of his death the country was plunged into the most profound grief. It was said that when the news reached Frankfort some of the delegates there assembled at the Diet fainted from grief. The Hungarians, like the Bohemians, did not love Albert, and only tolerated him on account of his wife, whom they regarded as the rightful heir to the throne. Still the premature death of this ruler was a great misfortune, since he was a man of considerable ability, and it was believed would have made a good king.

The year 1439 is memorable on account of the great plague that swept over the country. The Plague. About 51,000 people perished in Bohemia during the summer.

Among the victims of the plague was Filibert, the Bishop of Constance, and at this time the legate of the Council of Basil to Bohemia. He was also acting Archbishop of Bohemia, and in this capacity, he had consecrated many churches, confirmed thousands of children, and ordained many priests, both Catholic and Utraquist. On account of the latter fact, and because, being a Catholic, he did not hesitate to give the cup in communion to those who desired it, he was a great favorite among all the people, and his loss was sincerely mourned.

THE INTERREGNUM.

King Albert left two daughters, but no son, and thus Bohemia was again reduced to the necessity of choosing a ruler. Although Queen Elizabeth was a

woman of much strength of character and energy of will, neither the Hungarians nor the Bohemians seemed disposed to be satisfied with her government; for in those stormy times it seemed that nothing but the strong hand of a man could be intrusted to guide the helm of the ship of state. The Hungarians elected Vladislav, the King of Poland, to be their ruler, on condition that he marry Queen Elizabeth. Elizabeth was thirty years of age, and the young prince but sixteen; consequently the proposed marriage was most repugnant to both parties. When it was first proposed to Vladislav, he would not listen to it for a moment; but after the envoys and counselors showed him the danger threatening Christendom from the Turks, he finally consented, but with bitter tears and the feeling that he was offering himself as a sacrifice. He was, however, saved from this unhappy fate by the birth of a son to Queen Elizabeth. The moment Elizabeth saw that the child was a boy, hence heir to the throne, she broke off the negotiations, and would hear nothing more of the Polish marriage. The Hungarians, however, insisted upon having Vladislav as their king, and the result was a war between them and Queen Elizabeth.

The birth of the prince gave an heir to the Bohemian throne; but in the unsettled state of the country a ruler was needed at once, it being impossible to wait till the child should reach maturity.

At this time there were two parties in Prague, the National, or popular, headed by Ptaček, who, it will be remembered, had opposed the election of Albert without some guarantee for the keeping of the *Compactata*; and the side of the aristocracy, headed by Menhart of Hradetz and Ulric of Rosenberg, two of the most pop-

ular lords of the kingdom, but hated by the people since they had tried to deprive them of their dearly-purchased liberties.

The two parties held a Diet at Prague, when, to the surprise of all, the nobles agreed to the demands of the popular side; viz., to stand by the *Compactata*, to guard the privileges granted by Sigmund, and to try to secure the confirmation of Rokycan as archbishop.

Another Diet was appointed for the same year, where a king was to be elected. In the meantime the execution of the laws was placed in the hands of lieutenants chosen by the various districts. The need of some strong executive was sorely felt on account of the gangs of noblemen that devastated the country as robbers. Indeed, this evil had increased to such an extent that the first business of the lieutenants was to fit out expeditions against these robbers. Many strong fortresses were taken and destroyed, and the owners, irrespective of their noble blood, condemned to end their life upon the gallows.

At this time there were in Bohemia thirteen districts; and four of the most important ones formed a union, choosing Hynce Ptaček as their lieutenant. Prague was in the hands of Menhart of Hradetz, who exercised unlimited power in the city, having usurped most of the rights and privileges of other officials.

In 1440 the Diet met as agreed, and proceeded to the election of a king. The choice fell upon Albert, the Duke of Bavaria. This was a very wise choice. Duke Albert was well acquainted with the politics of Bohemia, having spent many years at the court of King Václav, and was a man of much ability. Unfortunately, the deputation sent him with the offer of the

crown was headed by the treacherous Ulric of Rosenberg, who, by false representation of the affairs of Bohemia, influenced Albert to refuse the crown, although he pretended to be trying to persuade him to accept it. This noble favored the claims of Elizabeth in behalf of the young prince, Ladislav, because in this way he had hopes that he himself could rule the country. Disappointed here, the popular side offered the crown to Frederick of Styria, who, at the death of Albert of Austria, had assumed the government of that country for Elizabeth, and was also the guardian of the young prince. Influenced by the party of Ulric of Rosenberg, he, too, refused. The crown was then offered him under other conditions, and as he did not wish to lose his influence in Bohemia by openly refusing it, he gave plausible replies, which was only to gain time. When, in 1442, Queen Elizabeth died, he was asked to rule the country as regent, but he did not accept immediately, and in this unsettled state of the country the troubles caused by petty wars among the nobility greatly increased, causing much distress among the common people.

THE RELIGIOUS POWER OF THE TABORITES BROKEN.

In the year 1437, during the insurrection against Sigmund, John Kolda, a famous Taborite general, gained possession of the fortress of Nachod, and from there carried on a petty war against the district of Hradetz and Silesia. This war finally grew to such dimensions that a strong force was found to be necessary to oppose him. Silesia, Hradetz, the four districts ruled by Ptaček, and Prague, united their forces to oppose the daring chief. His old friends, the Taborites,

could not resist the temptation to go to Kolda's assistance, which unwise act proved the cause of their moral ruin. Ulric of Rosenberg embraced this favorable moment to destroy forever the power of his hated neighbors, and so he turned his armies against the cities that were faithful to the Taborite doctrine. The war that followed, although lasting but six weeks, was very destructive to life and property.

When peace was made, the Taborites were requested to come to some agreement in matters of faith with the established Church. The Taborite priests replied that they could not be expected to do this, since the other parties themselves disagreed in matters of faith. As this charge was well founded, Ptaček decided that they must first come to some understanding before they could consistently persecute the Taborites. July, 1443, the Taborites were called to a Diet held at Kuttenberg to defend their doctrines and hear the decision of the priests there assembled.

The main point in which the Taborites differed from the Calixtines was in regard to the Lord's Supper. They insisted that Christ was present in the bread and wine spiritually, and that to worship these tokens was idolatry as base as the worship of stocks and stones. The Calixtines, on the other hand, firmly believed in the doctrine of transubstantiation, and looked upon the belief of the Taborites as rank heresy.

A committee was appointed to draw up a series of resolutions in regard to the doctrine of the Taborites. This was done with so much craft and one-sidedness, that it succeeded in putting the stigma of heresy upon that sect, which rendered them so unpopular that they were deserted by almost all the cities that had thus far

been loyal to their cause. Ptaček and his party very wisely refrained from persecuting them, knowing that this would at once enlist many friends in their cause. There is no question that in some respects the Taborites were very fanatical, but neither can it be denied that many of their beliefs were far more rational than those of their opponents. There is something very peculiar in those disputes with the Taborites; many of their priests were married, and yet this is never brought up against them.

In regard to the threatened war against Kolda himself, it never took place, the matter being settled by arbitration, Kolda being left in possession of the fortress of Nachod.

GEORGE PODĚBRAD.

In the year 1444, a severe misfortune befell the country in the death of its able and patriotic leader, Hynce Ptaček of Bergstein. George Poděbrad, at this time a young man enjoying considerable popularity, was accepted as his successor.

George Poděbrad was the son of Victorin Poděbrad, who had distinguished himself in the battle of Vyšehrad, 1420. It was a common report that Žižka was his godfather, which is quite probable, since his father was a zealous Hussite and a warm friend of that great warrior. In 1441, George had married Kunhut, the daughter of Sir Smil Holický of Sternberg, who belonged to the Orphans, and was much beloved for his sincerity and faithfulness. These facts, doubtless, influenced the Taborites to join the Poděbrad party, which soon became known as the Poděbrad League.

Æneas Silvius says of Poděbrad: "He was a man

of great and many-sided gifts, of exhaustless energy and enterprise, of keen intuition, so that he seldom made a mistake, when compelled to decide a question on the spur of the moment; he was a man of agreeable manners, just and upright in his dealings, but somewhat contaminated by heresy."

With a man of so much energy of character at the head of public affairs, a great change for the better soon manifested itself. A General Diet was called at Prague, but the Poděbrad League would not attend, and held a Diet of their own at Nimburg. However, they sent a letter to the Diet at Prague, stating their grievances. The pressing needs of the country were the keeping of the *Compactata*, the confirmation of Rokycan as archbishop, and the ordination of Utraquist priests. Since the death of Filibert, no such priests were ordained, the Bishops of Lytomyšl and Olmutz refusing to perform this office in direct violation of the provisions of the *Compactata*. Whenever a Diet was held in Prague, the delegates acted in a very insincere manner; they agreed to everything, but when it came to carrying out their decisions, they made excuses, invented new and unheard-of objections, and thus thwarted the wishes of the greater part of the nation.

In reply to this, the Diet of Prague sent a conciliatory defense of themselves. In regard to Rokycan, they said it was his own fault that he was not confirmed as archbishop; that had he obeyed Sigmund and gone to Basil, he would have been archbishop long ago.

Rokycan truly had been urged to go to Basil; but he refused, knowing both the emperor and the fathers

to be his avowed enemies, and that his life would be in danger.

The Bohemians in their perplexity, decided to turn to Cardinal Julian for the confirmation of Rokycan; but while the discussions were still going on, that great prelate was no more. He fell in the battle of Varney while on an expedition with King Vladislav of Hungary against the Turks. Then they turned to Pope Eugene; but he gave an evasive reply, which was, in fact, a denial. The great enemy that baffled all their plans was that treacherous nobleman, Sir Ulric of Rosenberg. Indeed, this man was so selfish and false that he received a reprimand from the Pope on account of his double dealing.

The man who honestly tried to serve the country was George Poděbrad, and, as might be supposed, these two became rivals, each striving to gain entire control of public affairs. The friends of Poděbrad formed a union, whose aim was to thwart the plans of the nobility as represented by Ulric of Rosenberg, and thus there was fought a duel upon a grand scale. The fighting was not done with soldiers and munitions of war, but with moral qualities, statesmanlike genius, and narrow diplomatic intrigues and endless negotiations. The duel was the more interesting since Sir Ulric was the uncle of Poděbrad.

In 1446 a Diet was held in Prague, where the appointment of a governor with royal powers was discussed. The example for this was set by the Hungarians, who, after the death of King Vladislav, had elected General Huniades governor. Although the Diet approved the proposal, as yet no governor was appointed.

In 1447, another delegation was sent to Rome, to ask for the confirmation of Rokycan. The answer given was significant as showing the attitude of the Church toward Bohemia.

Henry Kalteisen, famed as one of the most eloquent doctors at the Council of Basil, said to the delegates: "There is much that is tangled in Bohemia; it would take an Italian, or some one equally wise, to devise some remedy. Therefore, beseech the Pope to send you such a one; for, indeed, he will never consent to confirm Rokycan, unless he abjure the chalice.

"The German States hold you as heretics, trying on all occasions to prove this. There are those here that declare that the document you bring is not from the whole nation; and if this be the case, you shall pay the penalty in fire. If Rokycan will be obedient in all things, accepting the teachings of Rome, he will be confirmed; but if not, he will be excommunicated with all his adherents. Give up that chalice, and conform yourself to the Church of Rome; for as long as you do not, the Germans will storm, and the time will come when you shall be compelled to do it. Various things are said of that Rokycan; I shall investigate the matter when I get to your country; but if he give up the chalice, he shall be archbishop, and obtain whatever other dignity he desire."

From the tone of the above address, it is needless to add that the delegation was fruitless of results.

The same year that the delegation went to Rome another also went to Vienna, to try to induce the emperor to come to some terms in regard to the young prince; but he, as before, sought refuge in procrastination.

George Poděbrad and his party now decided that the time had come, not to treat, but to act. A secret meeting was held in Kuttenberg, where it was agreed to raise an army, seize Prague, and establish some form of government. As an army could not be drilled in secret, a plausible pretext was soon found. The Princes of Saxony, Frederick and William, were at war with each other. William, the younger brother, called to his aid a force of 9,000 Bohemians; but ere they reached their destination the brothers were at peace, and the soldiers were dismissed without any remuneration, suffering great privations on their way back to Bohemia. When they reached home, they were full of indignation, and loudly clamored that either Prague or Poděbrad should take up their cause, and lead them back to avenge their honor. This incident, therefore, was now used as an excuse for raising and equipping an army. These warlike preparations disturbed the mind of Emperor Frederick, and he sent messengers to Rosenberg to inquire the meaning of them; but that noble had been kept in such complete ignorance of what was going on, that when Poděbrad asked him to accept an embassy to Vienna he at once consented, suspecting nothing. This sagacious and powerful nobleman out of the way, the Poděbrad party could carry out its plots without any opposition. Before the plans could be carried out, an event happened in Prague that precipitated matters, and made the people all the more willing to accept Poděbrad as a deliverer.

The Pope had sent his legate, Cardinal Carvajal, to settle the difficulties in Bohemia. The people, expecting that he would confirm Rokycan, and see that the *Compactata* was better carried out, received him

with joy, giving him a right royal welcome. But, to their bitter disappointment, they soon discovered that Cardinal Carvajal differed in no way from the other dignitaries of Rome, and that he would confirm nothing. When the news of this spread through the city, the people gathered together, seized what weapons they could find, and drove the cardinal with his attendants out of the city. Suddenly a cry arose that he was carrying off the precious document of the *Compactata*. The mob became furious, and the prelate, together with all his attendants, would doubtless have been cut to pieces, had he not immediately given up the stolen paper.

The whole city was in an uproar, and, to pacify the people, the officers called all the priests into the Carolinam, and ordered that they obey the articles of the *Compactata*, and, whether Catholics or Utraquists, give the communion in both kinds.

THE CAPTURE OF PRAGUE BY GEORGE PODĚBRAD.

The army being prepared, and the most formidable enemy being out of the country, war was declared on the first of September (1448) against the city of Prague, or rather against those who had control of the city. The chief of these was Menhart of Hradetz, who, as burggrave of the citadel of the Hradschin, had so much power that he had been virtual dictator of the city for about ten years; but at this time was the mere tool of Ulric of Rosenberg.

The army of Poděbrad reached Prague September 3d, and prepared to attack it from several directions at the same time. The Royalists, being taken entirely by surprise, made a pretense of resistance,

and then fled in all directions. Menhart, however, was taken prisoner, and afterwards confined in the fortress of Poděbrad.

As the people looked upon Poděbrad as their deliverer, there would scarcely have been any bloodshed, but that the mob embraced the favorable moment to attack and plunder the Jews. This unfortunate race, on all such occasions, was sure to suffer from the fanaticism and cruelty of the Christians.

The capture of Prague by George Poděbrad brought a great change to the city. From the time the war ended, there was a continual tendency to return to pre-Hussite faith and customs, so that at this time the city was more Catholic than Calixtine; but with the arrival of Poděbrad, all this was changed. The city officers were selected from faithful Utraquists, who would see that the articles of the *Compactata* were followed. The Chapter of Prague, seeing that they could not control matters, removed to Pilsen, and the German professors and students, of whom a large number had again settled in the city, also moved away. John Rokycan, who for a long time had been in exile, was now recalled, and honored with a welcome even more splendid than had been accorded to Cardinal Carvajal.

As Poděbrad was the virtual governor of Prague, and it seemed probable that he would soon become ruler of all Bohemia, the unruly elements began to submit to his authority, and peace and public security were at once restored. There is no question that Poděbrad was a usurper; but the miseries caused by the state of anarchy that had so long prevailed were so great that the people were rejoiced to have the

laws again well administered, little caring by whom. Then, too, Poděbrad acted with a great deal of prudence. To conciliate the Catholics, he appointed Zdenek of Sternberg, a Catholic nobleman, burggrave of the citadel of Hradschin.

The first opposition that Poděbrad encountered was from Ulric of Hradetz, the son of the imprisoned Menhart. The young nobleman demanded the release of his father, which being denied, he immediately prepared for war. Menhart took his imprisonment so hard that he had become ill, and, although he enjoyed every comfort, he kept growing worse, till Poděbrad, fearing he might die on his hands, and he be blamed for his death, released him; but it was already too late; for he died soon after, and the report was spread that he had been foully dealt with.

Shortly after this (February, 1449), the chief noblemen of the country met at Strakonitz, and organized a league, wherein they bound themselves to resist all illegal government, and all infringement upon the rights of their class. In distinction of the Poděbrad Union, this was called the Strakonitz League.

Civil war broke out afresh; the success being quite variable. Poděbrad invited the members of the Strakonitz League to a General Diet to be held in Prague; but they refused to venture into a city entirely in the hands of their enemies; but, in their turn, they proposed a Diet at Pilsen, and again the other party refused to go to a city so ultra-Catholic. Finally it was agreed to hold a Diet at Iglau, a neutral city. In this Diet, not only Bohemia and Moravia were to be represented, but also Silesia and Lusatia.

The Diet was held as agreed upon; but as each

party feared to compromise itself by making concessions, nothing of importance was accomplished, and war was resumed. In 1451 another Diet was held in Prague, where the main question to be settled was the governorship of the country. The common people were unanimous in their desire to have this honor conferred upon Poděbrad; but the nobility opposed this, for they both feared and hated him.

It will be remembered that the nobility, headed by the Lord of Rosenberg, persistently opposed all agreements with the Emperor Frederick in regard to Prince Ladislav; but now, seeing the government in the hands of their enemies, they were as anxious to get the prince into the country as they had been before to keep him out. Poděbrad, feeling confident that even then he should not lose his hold upon the government, did not oppose them.

Under the benign influence of good order, the country increased in prosperity. The implements of war were gradually laid aside, giving place to implements of peace; and trade, agriculture, and business everywhere revived. The change for the better was noticed abroad, and all, enemies as well as friends, acknowledged Poděbrad the author of these beneficent changes. Consequently, whenever the question of governorship arose, all turned their eyes to Poděbrad as the one man in the kingdom fully competent to stand at the head of the government.

A delegation was again sent to Vienna, asking the emperor to give up the young prince; but he replied that since they had already waited twelve years, they could wait a few years longer, till Ladislav should become more mature.

In April, 1452, a Diet was held in Prague, and George Poděbrad duly elected Governor of Bohemia. He was to be assisted by a Council of Twelve, and to exercise all the powers and prerogatives of a king.

At first some of the nobles, and also some cities, refused to acknowledge his authority; but seeing that his government was becoming more and more established they finally submitted.

THE MONK CAPISTRAN.

A history of the times would hardly be complete without some account of the Monk Capistran. This strange man was a Franciscan monk, born in Naples in 1385. As a monk he drew the attention of his brethren upon himself by the zeal with which he performed his religious tasks. At the Council of Florence he distinguished himself by trying to bring about a union between the Greek and the Latin Churches. But he was mostly famous as a missionary. He made long missionary tours through Germany, Poland, and Moravia, everywhere attracting crowds of people by the austerity of his life and the eloquence of his discourses. It was said that his eloquence was so great, that, as soon as he began to preach, the people began to weep, although they did not understand a word he said, his discourses being in Latin, and translated to the audience at the close of the sermon. It was estimated that Capistran converted to the Catholic faith about 16,000 Calixtines, and this while preaching along the boundaries of the country, being forbidden by Poděbrad to come into Bohemia. For this indignity he revenged himself upon the Bohemians by representing

them in Germany as frightful heretics, deserving the abhorrence of all faithful Christians.

THE EMBASSY TO CONSTANTINOPLE.

When the Bohemians were continually disappointed in their hopes to see Rokycan confirmed as archbishop, and also some provisions made for the carrying out of the *Compactata*, they concluded that it would be a good plan to seek help from the Greek Church in the East. An embassy was, therefore, fitted out to Constantinople. The delegates were received with the greatest kindness, and strong hopes were entertained of bringing the undertaking to a successful issue, when all these hope were dashed to the ground by the capture of Constantinople by the Turks in 1453.

KING LADISLAV.

In 1453, Frederick, taking with himself the Prince Ladislav, went to Rome to be crowned Emperor of Germany.

During his absence his lords rose in rebellion, gained possession of many cities, so that when he returned, he found himself surrounded by all manner of difficulties. The Bohemians embraced this opportunity to induce him to give up their prince. In the same year Ladislav was declared King of Bohemia, and George Poděbrad was appointed his regent, with the provision that he was to hold the governorship six years longer. This agreement put an end to all trouble; for Poděbrad's government, backed by royal authority, was unquestionably accepted by all.

In the fall of 1453 the youthful king came to

Iglau, where he was met by a party from Prague, sent to act as an honorable escort to the royal party to Prague. Upon the borders of Bohemia he took a solemn oath, promising to keep the rights and liberties of the country.

As soon as King Ladislav arrived in Prague he was crowned with great magnificence in the presence of the States from Bohemia, Moravia, Silesia, and Lusatia. All the more important towns were represented, except Breslau, whose citizens, roused by the preaching of the Monk Capistran, refused to enter into the "heresy-accursed city of Prague."

Ladislav was a tall, beautiful youth, having a fair complexion, bright eyes, and an abundance of golden locks. His demeanor was dignified and pleasing, his morals pure, and he seemed to have a natural dislike to all rough sports. But in childhood, missing a mother's tender care, and subject to the constant espionage of the guards his uncle placed about him, he early learned to be reserved and to practice the art of dissimulation.

At first he looked with distrust upon the Bohemians as contaminated by heresy; but he was soon convinced of the disinterestedness of Poděbrad's motives, and gradually a warm friendship sprang up between them. Ladislav called Poděbrad "father," and the regent called the king "son." Such friendship and confidence was especially difficult to maintain, since the other noblemen were constantly on the lookout to create dissensions and arouse the suspicions of the king against the regent.

During the short reign of Ladislav, no events of great importance happened; but there was a constant

growth in good order and prosperity. In 1457 the Council of Twelve decided that it would be advisable for the young king to marry, and Magdalen, the daughter of the King of France, was selected as the bride; but before she could be brought into the country, Ladislav was taken ill of the plague, and died, November 23, 1457.

When on his death-bed, Poděbrad tried to comfort him, telling him to be of good cheer, that he would soon be better; but Ladislav replied: "My dear George, I have long ago learned to appreciate thy virtues and thy loyalty. Thou wast the chief cause that I was chosen King of Bohemia. I had indeed hoped to rule in this kingdom that thou hast made ready for me; but our Heavenly Father has determined otherwise. I must die; the government will be in thy hands. I ask of thee two favors: First, that thou shouldst strive to preserve peace with the other nations, and that thou shouldst rule the people of this kingdom in righteousness, that widows, orphans, and the poor should have justice, and thy hand be stretched out to protect them; the second, that those that came here with me from Austria should be allowed to return unharmed to their country." As Poděbrad still hoped the illness would not prove fatal, he tried to comfort Ladislav; but the latter seized his hand, and implored him to promise, with so much earnestness, that he promised all. The king then became calm, and awaited his end with resignation.

GEORGE PODĚBRAD—KING OF BOHEMIA.

At the death of King Ladislav, Poděbrad announced to the States that his term of office as regent had not

yet expired, so he was allowed to resume the government of the country.

The Bohemian throne, according to the agreement with Sigmund, was to fall to the house of Austria, now to the Emperor Frederick III; but that ruler making no effort to secure the prize, the Bohemians were left to choose their own king. Under the wise administration of Poděbrad, the country was brought to such a state of prosperity that now there were many candidates. It will be remembered how, a few years before, no prince could be found to accept the crown, thinking that the troubles coming with it would be greater than the honors. Now all this was changed. Poděbrad at this proved himself a skillful diplomat. All the candidates were received with great honor, were given opportunity to present their claims and receive a fair hearing, and then, to the amazement of all, Poděbrad was unanimously elected by the Diet as King of Bohemia. Even the two great Catholic lords, Zdenek of Sternberg, and John, the son of Ulric of Rosenberg, voted for him, he having won their favor by placing them in high positions during his regency. Indeed, the first one that hailed him king was Zdenek of Sternberg. Kneeling before him he exclaimed: "Long live George, our gracious king and master!" Poděbrad thanked them for the election in a few well-chosen words, at which they were moved to tears. Some one in the assembly began to sing "*Te Deum Laudamus*." This was joined in by others, the news got outside, the church-bells were rung, the people gathered in groups eager to hear the joyful tidings, and soon the whole city was engaged in all manner of joyful demonstra-

tions. Poděbrad was escorted to the Teyn church, where Rokycan delivered an address of welcome.

Although the Bohemian people rejoiced at the election of Poděbrad, the news was not well received by the rulers of neighboring States. Poděbrad was but a nobleman, in no way related to any person of royal blood, and raising him to the royal throne seemed to establish a dangerous precedent. Besides this, many were opposed to him on account of his religious views. This was especially the case with Lusatia and Silesia.

The first ally that King George secured was Matthias Corvinus of Hungary. He had been imprisoned by Ladislav; but as soon as the latter died, George Poděbrad released him and re-established him upon the throne of Hungary; and to strengthen still more the bonds of friendship, he gave him his daughter Katherine in marriage. In consideration of these services, Matthias sent two of his bishops to Prague to perform the ceremony of coronation. This was done with the consent of Cardinal Carvajal, then the Pope's legate in Hungary. But before he would consent to this, King George was obliged to take a solemn oath that he would render the same obedience to Rome that other princes of Christendom did. This oath proved to be the source of endless trouble to him, he claiming that he kept it, when he kept the articles of the *Compactata*, and the Pope that he violated it by refusing to suppress all heresy; by heresy meaning Utraquism.

During this time the power of the German princes was much weakened by constant quarrels, and King George, by skillful diplomacy, managed to use this weakness to strengthen his own power. His reign

would have proved very successful had it not been for the question of religion.

In 1458, Pope Calixtus III died, and was succeeded by Æneas Silvius, known in history as Pope Pius II. Pope Pius was thoroughly acquainted with affairs in Bohemia, and it was his conviction that, willing or unwilling, the people ought to be brought back into unconditional subjection to the Papal See. Before George Poděbrad was raised to the royal throne, or Æneas Silvius to the papacy, they had had several long conversations, at which Poděbrad showed so much moderation that that prelate imagined he could be used as a tool to accomplish the desired object.

In the year 1459, troubles arose between Matthias Corvinus and the Hungarian nobles, who had chosen him their king. Turning for assistance to King George, they offered him the crown for his son Henry; but seeing no gain in the offered prize, King George refused it. It was then offered to Emperor Frederick, who gladly accepted it. In the war and negotiations that arose from this, the Bohemian king acted as a mediator, inclining to the side of Frederick, which so won the favor of the latter that he granted him Bohemia as a fief, thus acknowledging him the lawful ruler of the country. Thus by diplomacy, by genuine acts of kindness, by the marriage of his sons and daughters with those of the neighboring princes, King George sought to establish his power; and this he would have done, had it not been for the interference of the Church.

KING GEORGE AND PIUS II.

As has been said, Pope Pius II determined from the first to bring back the Bohemians into unquestioning

obedience to the Church of Rome; and as soon as the troubles in Hungary and Germany had been somewhat settled, he seized the favorable moment to carry into effect his plans.

King George was obedient to the Church in that he would permit no other sects to arise except those provided for by the *Compactata*; and to secure this result he had not scrupled to resort to persecution and torture; but the Pope was not satisfied with this. King George then fitted out an embassy to Rome to lay his case before the Church and show the fathers how difficult it would be to make any changes in Bohemia. The messengers were well received; but their request that things might remain as they were, was declared improper; and then, calling an assembly of cardinals and other dignitaries of the Church, the Pope formally declared the *Compactata* null and void. The messengers were loath to carry home such sad tidings, so they asked the Pope to send his own messenger to deliver the news. Dr. Fautin, a zealous Papist, was appointed for this duty. The Pope then warned the delegates to use all their powers of persuasion and all their influence to induce the king to submit peaceably; because if he did not, the Church would be obliged to resort to force. The Pope himself did not realize what an unreasonable demand he was making. Had King George really desired to bring back the country to Catholicism, he could not have done so without resorting to arms.

The news of the revocation of the *Compactata* plunged the country into grief and consternation. King George called a Diet to meet at his palace on the Hradschin, and, seating himself upon his royal throne,

his wife and children by his side, he addressed the Assembly in the following words:

“We are greatly surprised at the doings of the Pope; for it seems that it is his intention again to bring war into this kingdom, that was brought into unity and peace by means of the *Compactata*. How can he destroy and take away from us what was granted us by the holy Council of Basil, which was greater than any Pope; yea, and confirmed by his predecessor, Eugene IV? Should each Pope thus attempt to bring to naught what was done by others, what security would there be for any law? He complains that we have not kept the oath taken before our coronation. We will read to you that oath.” After the oath was read, the king continued: “You have heard that we swore to destroy all errors, sects, and heresy in our kingdom. Know you with certainty that we do not love heretics, nor do we wish to defend them; but we never supposed that our *Compactata*, and taking the cup in communion, was heresy, since they are based upon the Gospel and the practice of the primitive Church. We were born to the Calixtine faith, and never deviated from the teaching of our parents. We conformed to this faith while a noble; then, again, as governor of the country; and in the same faith we ascended the royal throne. How, then, could we declare this faith heresy, and by trying to exterminate it make war upon ourselves? It is a great mistake, for which we are not responsible, that any one should think that, for the sake of the royal throne, we would do violence to our own conscience, deny our faith, and contend against God. Therefore, know ye all, that, as we ourselves, so our wife by our side, and our dear children, will remain true to the

Calixtine doctrine according to the *Compactata*, and for this faith we are ready to lay down our crown and our very lives."

This speech made such a deep impression upon the audience that all were moved to tears and some could not refrain from sobbing aloud.

Then the king ordered the *Compactata* to be read, and the agreements made by Sigmund, Albert, and Ladislav, and showed how unjust it was to deprive him of privileges granted to three of his predecessors. After this, Fantin was called, and permitted to address the Assembly. He declared that the *Compactata* was revoked, and that communion in both kinds was now prohibited. Fantin then said: "I declare to you the will of the most holy father, which is, that you, King George, your queen, and your children should not take communion except in St. Václav's Church on the Hradschin; that you should clear your court of all unworthy chaplains, the sowers of errors leading to damnation, and deliver them up to the Chapter of Prague for punishment; forbid all heretics to administer the sacraments, which, in their hands, are not sacraments, but blasphemies; and if you refuse to do this, you will stand before man and God guilty of perjury." Here the king remonstrated that he had never violated his oath, and that he had witnesses who could prove this. To this Fantin replied: "It is not for you, O King, to interpret your oath, but for him who administered it." The king then said: "I acknowledge no judge but my own conscience." Fantin then said: "Do you dare to withstand the apostolic commands? Remember what you do; it is rebellion, not obedience, and the Pope will not leave it unpunished. His power

reaches far ; look to your crown. What is the source of all earthly honors? Where do kings get their crowns, prelates their authority and honors, institutions of learning their privileges? And he who can grant them, can also take them away."

The king was so indignant at this daring speech that he laid his hand upon his sword, and nothing but the sacredness of the office of ambassador saved the life of Fantin. However, he was allowed to depart in peace ; but the following day he was seized and cast into prison, which proved a means of safety to him ; for had he been left at liberty, he would probably have been murdered by the angry populace.

As King George thus openly avowed his independence, and refused to comply with the wishes of the Pope, that pontiff immediately began to rouse against him the German princes. He sent his legate to Breslau to order the people to withhold their allegiance, which they willingly did, being made zealous in their devotion to the Church by the preaching of the Monk Capistran. Other cities and some nobles followed their example. The Pope now prepared to push his policy to its ultimate results ; but an unforeseen event put a stop to it for some time.

INSURRECTION AGAINST EMPEROR FREDERICK.

The people of Vienna, the Archduke of Austria, and some noblemen, rose up in rebellion against the emperor. He was surrounded in his palace in Vienna, the enraged populace demanding the destruction of the whole royal family. In his extremity, Frederick sent a messenger to King George to implore him to come to his assistance, although at this time the two

rulers were not on friendly terms. King George immediately sent a small army under the command of his son Victorin, himself promising to follow as soon as a larger army could be collected. The nobles responded to his call to send their quota of troops, so that in a few days the king followed with a force of 20,000. Victorin's small force had been defeated; but when the rebels heard of the large army coming to the aid of the emperor, they became alarmed, and agreed to treat for peace.

The emperor was so grateful for his deliverance that he granted the Bohemian king a number of substantial favors, of which the most valuable at this time was his promise to intercede in his behalf at the Papal court. The two rulers then took leave of each other with many expressions of good-will. At the parting, the emperor was so deeply moved that he fell upon the neck of King George and wept.

True to his promise, Frederick immediately sent letters to Rome, telling the Pope of his deliverance, and begging him to be lenient in his treatment of a ruler to whom he was bound by so great a debt of gratitude.

When the Pope received the letter of the emperor, he broke forth in woeful lamentations. In his reply to Frederick he said:

"And thou, although thou didst bear thy fate manfully, hadst no hopes of deliverance except from the King of Bohemia! Was there no one but him to tame the mad Viennese, and help thee to regain thy liberty? Therefore thou dost beseech us that, though he be a heretic, we should refrain from punishing him according to the law? O unhappy age! O wretched Ger-

mans! O miserable Christendom, whose emperor can not be saved except by a heretic king!"

The Pope ostensibly complied with the request of the emperor; but he by no means gave up the design of humbling King George, and compelling him to submit to Rome. He was only biding his time, when he could do so without incurring the displeasure of the emperor.

King George knew that the storm was not over, but merely postponed. In the interval of peace he prepared for the coming strife. He conceived a plan to thwart the plots of Pius, which was as bold as it was original.

The enterprise in which all European princes were more or less interested, was the war with the Turks. The initiative for this always started at the court of Rome. King George conceived the idea that if the European princes could be induced to assume the whole responsibility in this, they might in time learn to act independently in other things, and thus free themselves from the despotism of Rome. To this end he sent messengers to some of the princes of Europe. Louis XI of France was favorably impressed with the plan; for he, too, had many grievances against the Pope. The Venetians were eager to engage in the undertaking; for they were great sufferers from the depredations of the Turks. King Casimir of Poland entered wholly into the plan. He had a personal interview with the Bohemian king, and so was able to grasp the full significance of the idea. But at the Hungarian court the messengers met with no success; for the Pope, for a number of years, had been paying a subsidy to the Hungarian king to carry on the Turkish war, and he

knew that this would immediately be stopped if he entered into any alliance without the Pope's consent.

Although the negotiations were carried on with the utmost secrecy, they did not escape the vigilance of the Pope. As soon as he learned the truth he took the most vigorous measures to bring to naught the plans of his adversary. He announced to his cardinals, and to the rulers in Europe, that he himself would lead the armies against the Turks. Then he sought to establish a firm friendship between the emperor and Matthias, hoping in this way to weaken the friendship between the former and King George. He also succeeded in making an alliance of friendship between the Venetians and Hungarians, and finally, by various favors and promises, won over the princes of Europe, that none of them would engage in any enterprise not sanctioned by His Holiness.

Pope Pius now prepared to wreak his full vengeance upon the obstinate heretic. A Diet was held in Brünn, and the matter laid before the States belonging to the Kingdom of Bohemia; but, contrary to the expectations of the Pope, they interceded in behalf of their king. The emperor also interfered; but this time the Pope would not heed his request. March, 1464, Pope Pius issued a bull charging King George with heresy, and citing him to appear in Rome in one hundred and eighty days, to answer the charges brought against him. He also entered into secret negotiations with Casimir of Poland, offering him the crown of Bohemia, and with Frederick and Albert, the Margraves of Brandenburg, promising them Silesia and Lusatia. Fortunately, before he could carry out his designs, he passed away, and Pope Paul II became his successor.

Pope Paul suspended the proceedings, but only to gain time, that he might all the better crush his enemy. He placed his greatest dependence upon the Bohemian nobility, the wealthier part of whom were mostly Catholics. Difference in religious opinion, however, was not the main cause of their opposition to King George. They hated him because he was a strong ruler, allowing no enroachments upon the rights of the crown, nor upon the lower classes; but because, as a rule, they were treated with justness, they cherished their hatred in secret, waiting for a favorable time when they could satisfy their private grudges.

August 2, 1465, the Pope renewed the bull against King George, declaring him a heretic, and absolving his subjects from their allegiance.

Zdenek, of Sternberg, was the first nobleman who became the open enemy of King George. Meeting with his friends, they drew up a list of grievances, charging their king with many wrongs against their religion and class.

A General Diet was called to Prague, at which these grievances were considered, and unanimously declared to be false and got up with a malicious motive. The king then issued a proclamation, calling on all who thought they were in any way wronged, to present their grievances; that he was ready and willing to do justice to all. These measures brought back some of the nobles, but the majority remained in rebellion, forming a union called the Green Mountain League. The head of this was Zdenek of Sternberg, who now was in open opposition to his king. By various intrigues he succeeded in severing the friendship between King George and Emperor Frederick. He also

sent messengers to Rome, asking the Pope to give them another king, and suggesting that Casimir of Poland would be acceptable.

Casimir refused the crown, whereupon it was offered to Matthias of Hungary, who was eager to accept it. The wife of Matthias had died shortly before this, so that he was no longer bound to King George by ties of relationship.

Strenuous efforts were also made to rouse the German princes against King George; but they became alarmed lest the precedent established might deprive some of them of their own crowns. But Matthias immediately began to prepare for war.

When the 180 days had expired, and King George had not made his appearance in Rome, the Pope pronounced the final excommunication, and appointed Zdenek of Sternberg temporary ruler of Bohemia.

March 30, 1468, Matthias declared war against King George, claiming to be the defender of the Roman Catholic faith against the spreading heresy in Bohemia. Being fully prepared for war, he immediately invaded Moravia. Before this happened, King George had had a war with the lords of the Green Mountain League, and meeting with considerable success, he was able to induce them to enter into a truce, so that he could give his whole attention to the danger threatening from Hungary.

The war between George and Matthias was carried on mostly in Moravia, the Hungarian king being by far the more successful. In January, 1469, by a fortunate combination of circumstances, the army of Matthias was shut up at Vilem, so that he was entirely at the mercy of the Bohemian army. In this extremity Mat-

thias was willing to treat, and the two kings met and made peace. Matthias agreed to act as mediator between George and Pope Pius, and to beg the latter to restore the validity of the *Compactata*.

It is difficult to conceive how King George, so shrewd on most occasions, could now act in so undiplomatic a manner. Knowing the treacherous character of the Hungarian king, he made peace with him and set him at liberty, with no other guarantee for his future good behavior than his word of honor. Many of the officers and soldiers openly murmured at this, and the sequel proved that their fears were not unfounded.

One of the agreements made was that a Diet should be held at Olmutz, where all difficulties should be finally settled. At this very Diet, Matthias made an agreement with the nobles of the Green Mountain League, by which he was to be declared King of Bohemia. April 22d, the two kings parted, with many expressions of good-will, and, May 3d, Matthias was declared King of Bohemia.

When all hopes of peace were thus brought to naught, King George determined to come to some settlement of the difficulty, let it cost what it may. To secure one strong ally, he gave up his cherished plan of having his son succeed him, and offered the succession to the Polish king, in favor of his son Vladislav. This offer was received with great joy at the Polish court; but as the negotiations took considerable time, the war with Matthias continued.

The Catholic nobles were finally subdued, so that those that had not been driven out of the country were glad to make peace. Silesia also was driven to the necessity of consulting with the Pope's legate on what

terms she should make peace with her king. The emperor, fearing that Matthias would be too powerful as King of Hungary and Bohemia, began to look upon him with distrust, which soon turned into open enmity. Thus, partly through success in arms and partly by favoring circumstances, the position of the Bohemian king became so favorable that the Pope was willing to treat with the two kings with the purpose of making peace between them. But before the negotiations commenced, King George died, March 22, 1471.

THE AGE OF GEORGE PODĚBRAD.

(1420-1471.)

This age was the age of war and religious controversy, and the literature of this time was devoted to the latter subject. Palacký says: "The Bohemian of this age, whenever he raised his mind into the realm of thought, sought nothing there but endless questions about the Church, the Word of God, heresy, and Anti-christ, the sacrament of the Lord's Supper and the chalice, the rights and duties of hierarchy, and similar topics; and when he turned to labor, he saw nothing better than drilling in arms, arranging war-carts, and other occupations incident to war."

Jungman also speaks of this age with supreme contempt, since it was filled with aimless and empty controversies that led to wars and involved the neglect of all peaceful arts, occupations, and intellectual progress.

To a philosopher, it doubtless appears the height of folly that so much blood should be shed in the defense of so unimportant a principle as the Utraquist doctrine; but in the intellectual development of the nation this was no small matter. Having once accepted certain

principles, the people could not lay them aside without doing violence to their conscience. The doctrines embodied in the Four Articles of Prague, and afterwards in the *Compactata*, seemed to the people as newly-discovered truths, and whether they were actual truths or only seeming ones, the moral effect of being true to them or denying them was the same. Thus, in a general way, it may be said that this age was a time of marvelous intellectual activity, driven into the realm of religion by the logic of events. It was also a time when democracy had freer scope in Bohemia than at any other period.

During the reign of George Poděbrad the country enjoyed peace and prosperity, and this notwithstanding the continued efforts of the Pope to bring it back into complete subjection to the Church.

In this age the Bohemians proved that they were abundantly able to manage their own affairs, if only they were left unmolested by the surrounding nations. King George, the people's own choice, proved to be one of the best and ablest rulers that ever ascended the throne of Bohemia; and before this, the commanders in the Hussite armies, chosen from among the people, made Bohemia the terror of the German nations. It may be regarded a grievous misfortune that the great intellectual awakening that culminated in the Hussite Reformation came a century too soon, but it was a misfortune no one could foresee or control. The brave fight the people made for their rights and liberties, their devotion to accepted principles, their patriotism, all combine to make this the most glorious age in Bohemian history.

SOME DISTINGUISHED MEN OF THE AGE OF GEORGE
PODĚBRAD.

JOHN ROKYCAN.

John Rokycan was the chosen Archbishop of Bohemia, although his confirmation by the Pope was never secured. He was the head of the Reformed Church of Bohemia for half a century, and after his election to the archbishopric, performed the duties of that office as though he had been duly confirmed.

An old historian says that Rokycan was the son of a poor blacksmith in the village of Rokycan; hence the name Rokycan, by which he is known in history. The same writer says that God wrought great things through him for the salvation of souls; that the people abroad and at home greatly feared him, "even the king and queen, since he feared our dear God and was diligent in prayers, both day and night, even from his youth." According to the testimony of his friends, Rokycan lived a holy life and died blessed; according to that of his enemies, he lived like a reprobate, and died in despair.

The Catholic party ascribed most of the troubles in the Church to Rokycan; but in reality he was not responsible for them. He originated no new doctrines nor formulated any creeds, but his whole service consisted in that he was able to defend what had been acknowledged as the truth by the Hussite teachers. As to his character, that was as irreproachable as that of his great teacher Hus, his bitterest enemies never charging him with anything worse than heresy.

Rokycan was a man of much wisdom and moderation, great depth and earnestness of character, of fervent

patriotism, and unswerving devotion to the cause of truth. It was for these qualities that the Bohemians loved him, and endured all manner of persecution from the Pope rather than give up their chosen archbishop.

Rokycan died in 1471, about a month before his king, George Poděbrad.

PETER ČELČICKÝ.

The greatest man at this time in Bohemia as a thinker and writer, one who deserves the first place after John Hus, was Peter Čelčický, the founder of the Moravian Brethren. He was born about 1390, in the village of Čelčice. He spent some time at the University of Prague, but took no degree. His mind naturally turning to religious matters, he was about to enter a monastery, when the disturbances in the Church made him give up the design. Living on his small estate in the village of Čelčice, he had no access to libraries or other means of self-culture, and yet what scanty opportunities presented themselves were embraced with such eagerness that his name became known among the learned men of Prague, and he was regarded with admiration and great respect. In 1437, when the Englishman, Peter Payne, was exiled from Prague, he sought refuge at the house of the sage of Čelčice.

Čelčický began to write at the mature age of forty-three, and then it seems it was not from choice, but from a sort of moral necessity. He wrote to Rokycan, with whom he was on intimate terms of friendship, as follows: "My mind has something in it, God knows, that I must reveal to you, as to a man strong in great things."

The works of Čelčický are marked by great independence of thought. He rarely cites any authorities, but bases his arguments upon reason and the nature of things. As might be expected, the greater part of his writings treat of religious questions; but he also wrote about history, nature, morals, the rights of society, and the relations of Church and State.

In matters of faith, Čelčický did not agree with any of the sects of his day. He cared nothing for the power of the keys, did not believe in transubstantiation, nor in purgatory, indulgences, or the invocation of saints. War he called murder on a large scale, and prelates and priests he regarded the satraps of the rulers who supported them in their nefarious persecution of their subjects. Indeed, he regarded all government as an evil that existed only because of the extreme wickedness of man.

Throughout all the teachings of Čelčický, it is seen that he cared more for correct morals than for correct doctrines; but this morality was to be genuine, arising from real love to God and man. Anything not intrinsically sincere he would have condemned as unmercifully as Žižka.

BROTHER GREGORY.

What made Čelčický noted in history was not so much his writings as their effect upon others. Among these the most prominent was Gregory, or Brother Gregory, as he is known in the history of the Moravian Brethren.

In 1454, Rokycan, enduring much persecution on account of his unswerving devotion to the new doctrines, sought relief in zealous preaching against the

growing coldness in the Church. This preaching made a deep impression upon the mind of a poor peasant named Gregory, who could not rest until he had a personal interview with the preacher, hoping to find more instruction and comfort for his troubled soul. Rokycan gave him some of the books of Čelčický; but this only served the purpose of awakening his enthusiasm and curiosity, and he determined to visit the author himself. The result of the visit was that Gregory became a zealous disciple of the new teaching; and not keeping the good news for himself, he soon won others to his views, and this was virtually the beginning of the sect known as the Moravian Brethren.

The news of the proselytizing work of Gregory placed Rokycan in a very difficult position. He was not willing to go to such extremes in doctrine, and yet he could not attempt to tear down what he himself had helped to build up. Finally, he solved the problem by inducing King George to give Gregory and his followers a tract of land known as the Kunwald District, beyond Zamberg. This was a desolate region, made almost uninhabitable by devastations in the late wars. Thither Gregory and his friends moved in 1457, and here they were soon followed by people of similar beliefs from Bohemia and Moravia. Soon the population increased to such an extent that a regular form of government was established; and later, when people began to cause trouble by discussing religious questions, a form of belief and a ritual were also adopted.

The chief characteristics of the teachings of the Brethren were, that they laid more stress upon a good, moral life than upon any doctrine, that they taught that reason and piety go hand in hand, and that the

simple Word of God was to be accepted as the law of life, without any idle discussions and speculations.

The brethren lived pure, industrious lives, holding the law of mutual helpfulness above all commandments; but as they did not conform to either of the established forms of worship, the Calixtine or Catholic, the priests of the neighboring districts rose against them, calling their worship blasphemy, and their holy lives hypocrisy. For a long time Rokycan refused to take any steps against them; but when they began to ordain their own priests, thus severing all connection with the established Church, he lost all patience, and determined to suppress such heresies by force. In the storm that followed, the colony of Kunwald was entirely destroyed, many of the brethren were imprisoned, while others escaped, hiding themselves in the mountains and forests. The adherents of the new faith were indeed scattered, but their faith was not destroyed; it was cherished in secret, waiting to make its appearance as soon as the favorable moment arrived.

CUSTOMS AND MORALS OF THE PEOPLE.

Antonio Bonifini, an Italian who lived several years at the court of Matthias, gives the following account of the character of the Bohemians:

“The Čechs excel other nations in well-developed physique, strength of body, beauty and profusion of locks, and an agreeable demeanor. They pay a great deal of attention to their dress, arraying themselves with much elegance and taste, as though they were born to nothing but war and luxury. They are exceedingly amiable, and possess the ability of winning the friendship of others.”

The above description referred to the upper classes; but, with some modification, it would also apply to the lower. The manners of the common people were more coarse, but they were also exceedingly fond of fine clothes and display; and, when the occasion required, could be very amiable and pleasing in their manners.

Among the higher classes there was the same feeling for a point of honor as among other nations, and also carried to ridiculous extremes. If a man's "honor" was touched, he felt justified in resorting to arms, and committing no end of depredations and murders. The only favorable feature in this was, that, during war, the given word was held sacred. Thus a man whose honor in this respect was unsullied was regarded as "good," this referring not to any moral qualities, but to his birth, his bravery, and his faithfulness in dealing with others.

The author who gives us the most trustworthy account of this age, is Peter Čelčický. Some citations will therefore be given, both to show his style, and because the facts could not be told as well in some other phraseology.

EXTRACTS FROM THE WRITINGS OF ČELČICKÝ.

ON JEALOUSY OF HIGH BIRTH.—"The people, full of pride, warred with each other for honor and goods, shedding much blood, so they might sit in high places, proving their high birth from four corners—two grandfathers and two grandmothers. If one could prove this, he was regarded 'good;' if not, he was a knave, and a 'good man' would not sit with him as with one lean."

ABOUT THE POOR.—“In those days the people endured great evils on account of the long wars, waged on account of religion. Many of the peasants were obliged to forsake their homes on account of hunger; they were obliged to pay threefold and fourfold taxes, and what was left was taken away by the soldiers. The fortresses and cities were filled with thieves, who robbed, beat, and imprisoned the peasants. There can be no forgiveness for those cruel rulers who oppressed their peasants, calling them knaves and dogs, and all that they might satisfy their own insatiable appetites.

“It is not right for a noble or wealthy man to be idle all day long, to play chess and cards, to sleep long, to commit adultery like a brute, to stuff himself constantly, and pour down wine or beer into his throat as into a cask. It is not right for them thus to oppress the poor, do them wrong by compelling them to do service, to hunt, and imposing upon them many other burdens.

“As for showing pity to the poor, there is more shown to dogs, of which they keep large numbers, and feed them well with bread. They also have poodles, which they place beside themselves upon cushions, take them to the bath, wash and comb them, and buy and prepare for them fresh meat. But some poor Lazarus could not draw near to their table; he would stink to them.”

DEMORALIZATION IN MORALS.—“The priests and prelates do not hold it up as a sin for princes, nobles, and the rich to live a life of luxury, greed, pride, and be guilty of all manner of wickedness, because they

themselves are guilty of the same sins. They never say, 'You shall go to hell, because you have waxed fat by doing violence to the poor.' When such a one dies, they make him a grand funeral. A procession of priests, pupils, and other people is formed. There is ringing of bells, masses for the dead, singing and burning of candles, many offerings to the Church, much praise from the pulpit; so that it seems that the soul of such a one can not be lost. Besides this, by endowments to the Churches provision is made that prayers shall be said forever for the soul, so that it must be saved—if only those things be true."

PERSONAL SERVITUDE.—"Very early in the history of Bohemia, the peasants were oppressed, and obliged to do all manner of menial service for the noblemen of the surrounding country. Still they were personally free, and real servitude was not established in the country till after the Hussite wars. Before the Hussite wars, the number of small land-owners, subject only to the king, constituted about two-thirds of the population outside the cities. Owing to the devastations caused by the wars, this number constantly decreased, until, in the beginning of the sixteenth century, such land-owners were the rare exceptions, the bulk of the peasantry being subject to the nobility."

EDUCATION.—"Like other peaceful arts, education suffered greatly during the Hussite wars. Still the University of Prague continued for a long time with its regular courses of study, and degrees were granted; but finally it, too, began to feel the general demoralization, till, about the end of the fifteenth century, of the

four faculties only one remained, that of liberal arts. The suspension of the study of law and medicine, to say nothing of theology, proved a severe loss to the country."

VLADISLAV II.

The death of King George gave his enemies new courage, and the peace negotiations were thus fruitless of results. As soon as Matthias heard of the death of his adversary, he sent an army to Iglau, and from this place began to treat with the Bohemian States with reference to their accepting him as their king. For a while it seemed that he would be successful; but the Calixtine nobles succeeded in electing Vladislav, the oldest son of Casimir, King of Poland, as had been agreed by King George before his death.

Although Vladislav was but fifteen years of age, a better choice could not have been made; for with his father to back him, he could soon compel the Hungarian king to refrain from making further efforts to secure the crown for himself.

Vladislav took an oath to support the *Compactata*, and all the other agreements that had been entered into by Sigmund and the other Bohemian kings.

As soon as Matthias learned of the election of Vladislav, he began war anew, but did not meet with much success.

When Pope Sixtus saw that, even after the death of King George, the prospect of suppressing heresy in Bohemia was no better than before—since even the Catholic King of Poland had agreed to support the *Compactata*, and meanwhile the Turks were making fearful encroachments upon Christian lands—he attempted to make peace between the two kings, and, if

possible, turn their energies against the Mohammedans. But, to his sorrow, the Holy Father found that Matthias was a very obedient son of the Church when it was for his interest to obey; for now he would consent to nothing more than a truce. In the meantime he spared no pains to strengthen himself so that, when war should be resumed, he might be sure of success.

In 1474 the Turks invaded the country, and Matthias was obliged to march against them. He won a glorious victory, and, flushed with success, he broke the truce and marched into Moravia and Silesia. He was met by a Polish army 60,000 strong, but no definite action was taken. Another truce was made, which was to last two and a half years.

When war was resumed, the emperor went to the assistance of the Bohemians; but even then Matthias was so successful that peace was made with great loss to the country. Moravia, Silesia, and Lusatia were ceded to Matthias; but at his death they were to revert to the crown of Bohemia upon the payment of 400,000 guilders. Bohemia was thus smaller than it had been for over four centuries.

Although peace was restored, the dispute about the *Compactata* continued, the Pope being determined to destroy Utraquism in Bohemia. He resorted to moral rather than carnal weapons. He prohibited his bishops from ordaining candidates for the priesthood unless they first abjured Utraquism. Had this law been carried out, it would ultimately have destroyed this belief from the country; for a religion without priests is an impossibility. Various methods were resorted to, to keep up the supply of ministers. Many candidates journeyed to Italy, and persuaded the bish-

ops of that country to perform the desired ceremony. Some abjured Utraquism at the time of their ordination, and resumed its practice immediately after. At last salvation came to the country through the labors of an Italian bishop, Augustin Lucian of Modena.

This good bishop, seeing many Bohemian priests coming to the country seeking for ordination, was so moved with compassion, that he performed the required service notwithstanding all the protests of the Pope's legate. At last he determined himself to visit the country and ordain as many as came to him, thus providing "good shepherds for so many forsaken flocks."

In 1482 he came to Bohemia, and was received everywhere with the greatest joy. Cities sent out deputations to him, inviting him to become their bishop, promising to stand by him should it be at the cost of their lives and estates.

This extraordinary proceeding attracted the attention of the king, who sent messengers to Bishop Lucian asking an explanation of his conduct. The bishop replied that, for many years he had heard of the heresy in Bohemia, but that, when candidates came to him begging for consecration, he always found them good, virtuous men, correct in faith; and that, seeing what a wrong was done to Bohemia, he determined himself to go and serve them according to his ability; and that no one but God had prompted him to this act. He said that, since he came into the country, he saw that the people led better Christian lives than many others that made greater pretenses. He said, further, that he entertained strong hopes that he might help to bring about an understanding between the people and the

Pope. King Vladislav was satisfied with this answer, and Bishop Lucian continued his benign activity for many years.

Although Vladislav permitted the bishop to continue his labors among the Calixtines, at heart he was a Catholic, and early determined upon the destruction of the hated sect. He filled all important offices with zealous Catholics, or with Calixtines that were such only in name, and the more zealous ones soon discovered that they were pushed aside and persecuted under various idle prettexts.

An historian of this time says: "In those days a neighbor could not speak freely with neighbor, and when one wished to speak to another in the rink, he cast furtive glances about, like a wolf, lest there should be a third person near to betray him. Besides this, the aldermen had their detectives and traitors, who went about the public houses striving to inveigle people into conversation to betray them, so that they might be cast into prison, and often tortured."

In the summer of 1483 the country was visited with a fearful plague, as many as 30,000 persons perishing in the city of Prague. To escape the danger, the royal family fled first to Pilsen and then to Trebitz, Moravia. During the absence of the king, an event happened that changed the whole course of the reactionary movement spoken of above.

After the king had been in Moravia for some time, a report was spread in Prague that he was ill and not likely to recover. The prospect of an interval without any ruler made the aldermen redouble their vigilance in order to be prepared for the storm that they had reason to fear might arise. They barricaded the streets

with heavy chains, and had the troops prepared to sally out at a moment's notice.

A report was now spread among the people that the city authorities had entered into a conspiracy against the Calixtines; that they intended to drive out all their priests and university masters, and to murder eighty, whose lives were proscribed.

Whether the report was based on fact or not was never fully ascertained, for the people acted in so energetic a manner as to prevent the possibility of the event. September 24th, the day before the aldermen were to make the attack, an alarm was sounded from the Teyn church, and the streets were immediately filled with excited people. The aldermen now gave a counter alarm from the City Hall; but this only made matters worse for them. Their friends coming to their assistance were either killed upon the spot or taken prisoners. The people then turned against the City Halls. In the Old Town there was no bloodshed, the officers being all taken prisoners; but in the New Town, most of them were killed and thrown out of the windows. When the mob had wreaked its vengeance upon the city officers, it turned against the convents, and some of the monks were driven out of the city. Then it turned against the Jews, plundering them most cruelly. After these acts of violence, the people met and elected new officers, and then posted guards all over the city to prevent any further outbreaks.

The new officers immediately sent letters to King Vladislav, and to other cities, stating what had happened and the cause of it. They then tried the prisoners; several, being found guilty, were put to death without delay. Thus perished the mayors of all three

towns, and also several aldermen. Being put to torture, they pleaded guilty to the plot; but whether they really were guilty was never proved.

The news of this outbreak plunged the king into grief and wrath. Thus all his efforts to bring back the country into pre-Hussite paths were brought to naught at one blow. His most faithful officers were dead, and the Calixtines held their heads higher than they had dared to do for years. The king determined to mete out some signal punishment to the city of Prague, and to this end began to raise an army. To prevent Kuttenberg from following the example of Prague, he sent a force of 8,000 men to that city; but it was already too late. The royal army found the city so well fortified that it gave up the siege and returned to Caslau. When the king himself appeared before Kuttenberg, he was allowed to enter the city, but only with a small retinue.

A Diet was held at Caslau; but as about half of the delegates were Calixtines, and the king refused to make any concessions, nothing was accomplished. Another Diet was held at Kuttenberg, and there the trouble was settled. The citizens of Prague agreed to go out to meet their king, to humble themselves before him, to do him all honor; but, at the same time, they insisted that the *Compactata* must be kept as well as all the privileges granted to the people by Sigmund. King Vladislav was exceedingly reluctant to comply with this demand; but when he saw that the cause of the people was sustained by several powerful nobles, and also by the Italian Bishop Augustin, who possessed unbounded influence in the country, he at length accepted the terms, and returned to Prague, September

29, 1484. "Thus the king returned, and the city went out to meet him with flags and banners; and he was taken under the canopy and led into Prague in a respectful manner. . . . And thus it was that the storm ended in all that is good; for which may God be praised forever."

In the year 1485 a Diet was held at Kuttenberg, which is one of the most important in the religious history of the country. After fifteen years of fearful bloodshed, devastation of the country, and untold sufferings; after half a century of domestic strife, continued wars and vexations, that for their long continuance were maddening,—out of all this misery grew a single common-sense idea, and this idea was first publicly expressed at the Diet of Kuttenberg. This Diet passed a resolution that every person had the right to seek the salvation of his soul according to his own convictions and conscience, and that others should not hinder him in this, nor speak evil of him, nor persecute him.

This principle so enlightened the minds of the delegates that they passed many more humane resolutions. Both Catholics and Calixtines were to enjoy perfect equality, and the nobles were to guarantee the same liberty to their subjects, whether they agreed with them in faith or not. Priests were to preach against sins, and not rail against those not agreeing with them in doctrine. Whoever violated this law was to be regarded as the enemy of public weal, concord, and peace, as a rebel against his king, lord, and the Commonwealth of the Kingdom of Bohemia; and, if he did not reform, was to be deprived of honor and fined. Both sides were to unite in sending an embassy to the Holy Father, asking for the confirmation of the *Compactata*.

This agreement, entered into between the two parties, was to continue thirty-one years.

It is not to be supposed that the above resolutions settled all religious difficulties; it had merely the effect of quieting them to a considerable extent. Rome would not confirm the *Compactata*, and when Bishop Augustin died (1493), the Calixtine priests again were obliged to go to Italy for their ordination. In 1405, Philip de Novavilla, the Bishop of Sidon, came to Bohemia for the same purpose that Bishop Augustin had done; but being well advanced in years, his labors were of short duration.

Owing to the difficulty of securing priests, the Calixtines were obliged to take such as they could get, and thus their Church suffered a moral deterioration, losing in respect and dignity. For this reason, the more earnest people sought to find elsewhere what they missed in their own Church. This was found among the Moravian Brethren, who continued to increase in number notwithstanding all the edicts passed against them. At the close of the fifteenth century, they had some four hundred churches in the various cities of Bohemia. The chief seat of the Brethren was at Mlada Boleslav, where dwelt Brother Lukas, who, on account of his zeal, piety, and learning, was accepted as the leader after the death of Gregory.

Contrary to all expectations, King Vladislav II proved to be one of the weakest rulers that ever sat upon the throne of Bohemia. When he assumed the government, the country was in a good condition; but it was a time when the nobility struggled to re-establish their ancient powers, and a strong hand was needed to keep their growing ambition within reasonable limits.

But King Vladislav was at a loss to know what to do ; and when he did know, he lacked the energy of will to carry out his good resolutions. His weakness may be judged from the following anecdote : On one occasion the Diet passed some important measures, and in order that it might be sure of their being carried into effect, it at the same time appointed six men to keep the matter constantly before the king. Vladislav had no convictions of his own ; the last speaker always seemed to be the one to win the case. He had a habit of saying "Very well " to everything that was proposed to him, until he was nicknamed " King Very Well."

In the year 1490, Matthias died, just as he was on the point of beginning a new war against Bohemia. This was exceedingly fortunate ; for with so weak a king as Vladislav, the results would doubtless have been most disastrous to the country. As had been agreed, Moravia, Silesia, and Lusatia reverted to the Bohemian crown.

Matthias leaving no heirs, the throne was to be filled by election. Out of the numerous candidates, the Hungarians chose the Bohemian king, with the condition that he should take up his residence in their capital. Vladislav was not chosen because of any good qualities, but because of his well-known weakness. The Hungarian nobles were weary of such a king as Matthias, who ruled them with a strong hand, meting out signal punishment upon all who dared show any signs of disaffection. With such a ruler as Vladislav, they hoped to re-establish their old-time importance and independence.

The election of Vladislav to the Hungarian throne was a great misfortune to the Bohemians. A weak

king, residing out of the country, was equivalent to no king at all, and this state of affairs brought its train of evils.

The first grievous evil was the increase of robbers. All trade and commerce with other nations were ruined; for now no highway was safe for travel. Most of these robbers were noblemen, who, when pursued, found a safe retreat in their strong fortresses.

Another great evil was a sort of war between the nobles and the cities. When cities were first established, they were given certain rights and privileges; and now the nobles constantly tried to usurp these rights. One of these was the exclusive right to brew beer. The noblemen also brewed beer, and forbade their subjects from buying it elsewhere. The cities regarded this as a great wrong, and retaliated in various ways, often bringing the country into great trouble. A good illustration of this is the case of John Kopidlansky.

In 1506 the Knight Kopidlansky got into a quarrel with a certain yeoman in the Old Town of Prague, and killed him. He was tried by the aldermen, condemned, and beheaded, without even being allowed to have a priest to prepare him for death. This so enraged the brother of the knight that he declared war against the city of Prague. His hordes of ruffians were posted upon all the highways leading to Prague, and many inoffensive citizens were taken, horribly mutilated, and left to perish. Kopidlansky was sustained in this by other noblemen, who delighted in all things that tormented the cities.

In this state of anarchy, many messengers were sent to King Vladislav, imploring him to come to the

country and restore order. Finally he came, but did nothing except to pass some laws against the industrious, peace-loving Bohemian Brethren. These laws were not carried into effect; but later, whenever a ruler wanted to persecute the Brethren, he referred to these laws of Vladislav.

In 1509, Vladislav again came to Bohemia, his object being to have his three-year old son Louis crowned king of the country. He remained a year in the country, and called a Diet to settle the difficulty between the cities and the nobility. Influenced by some of the more powerful nobles, the king decided the case against the cities; but the latter, regarding this a great injustice, would not abide by the decision, and the quarrel grew more serious than before.

Vladislav, although a weak king, at times was very cruel. The year he staid in Prague, his Hungarian attendants caused so much trouble that the citizens could bear it no longer, and a bloody fight broke out between them and the Hungarians, in which sixteen of the foreigners lost their lives. The king had the citizens tried, and those that were found guilty were put to death with all manner of unheard-of torture. The executions lasted several days, till at last an execution being made so clumsily as to cause intense suffering to the victim, the people fell upon the headsman, murdering them upon the spot. When the king again started for Hungary he was followed by curses and imprecations that the people might never see his face again.

The struggle between the cities and the nobility continued, until the latter succeeded in having a law passed by which they obtained complete control of

the executive and judicial powers in the country. But the provisions of this law were not carried out; for the cities were so indignant that they prepared for war. Finally the cities found an able champion in Prince Bartholomew of Minsterberg, nephew of George Poděbrad. He succeeded in convincing the king that a great wrong was done to the cities, and also showed him how the crown itself was deprived of much revenue by the continual disturbances in the country. From this time on, the condition of the cities began to improve.

King Vladislav died in 1516, being sixty years old. He was succeeded by his son Louis, then only ten years of age.

FEUDALISM.

In the continual struggle between the cities and the nobility, almost no mention is made of the country people or peasantry, and yet they constituted by far the greater part of the population. The fact is, that at this time they were reduced to such a miserable state of servitude that their rights were not deemed worthy of consideration, and they themselves were helpless to assert them.

Except during the short period of the Hussite wars, the common people were usually entirely ignored. Everything of interest in the history of the country circles around the royal family and the nobility, and later about the inhabitants of the cities; and yet, in the earlier period of the nation's history, the common people were free, and in theory stood before the law on an equality with the higher classes. During the reign of Vladislav, servitude was fully established; but just when and how this came about, it is not easy

to tell. A few facts and dates will here be given, to show how the people were gradually deprived of their liberty.

The first account we have of *robota*, menial service, is in the reign of Boleslav (936-967). During the reign of Boleslav the peasants were compelled to build fortresses and bridges, to keep the horses of their masters, to help hunt, and to feed the dogs and the servants of the hunting expeditions. The tradesmen were required to furnish the nobles under whose jurisdiction they lived, a certain amount of goods; what they could make besides this was their own. In consideration of this service, they received some sort of protection.

Premysl Ottokar II (1253-1278), in establishing cities with special privileges, did a great deal to enslave the common people. By forbidding the tradesmen of small villages to work at their occupations, he reduced them to beggary, so that they had no alternative but to die of starvation, or sell themselves to some wealthy land-owner.

Besides this great wrong against the common people, Ottokar gave the power of capital punishment to the nobility, who found it so profitable that they strove to have it declared hereditary.

Charles IV, one of the best rulers the country ever had, did nothing for the common people that was permanent. By his courts of justice he relieved temporary evils; but as for passing laws to favor the poor, he was too dependent upon the Church and the nobility to presume to do anything so derogatory to the interests of either. The *Majestas Carolina* proposed by him, but rejected by the nobles, shows plainly the

wretched condition of the lower classes. But Charles went further than this. It was not enough that he submitted tamely to the rejection of laws that would have provided for a little justice to the peasants, but to win the favor of the nobility he granted them absolute control of the people living upon their estates.

During the reign of Václav IV, a dispute arose in regard to the law of decease (*odumrti*). It had become the custom that, when a peasant died leaving no children or near kin, his property fell to the lord upon whose estates he lived. By means of this custom the wealth of the nobility kept constantly increasing, while that of the peasants decreased in like proportion; for the noble could sell or lease the land to another peasant under more and more limitations, and the peasants thus were reduced to slavery.

This custom had no authority in the law of the land, and at length there arose a man who had the moral courage to raise his voice against it. This was John of Jenstein, the Archbishop of Prague during the reign of King Václav. The archbishop declared that he found the custom in vogue upon the episcopal estates; that, according to it, a peasant could make no will, nor dispose of his property during his life. He said the custom being contrary to natural, canonical, and God's law, he declared it abolished upon his estates, and that henceforth a peasant should dispose of his property as he saw fit, and, should he die intestate, the property was to fall to his nearest relatives.

The action of the archbishop brought on a long controversy. Master Albert, a member of the Chapter,

wrote a tractate defending the custom. He tried to prove that Bohemian peasants were merely *chlapi* (*ribaldi*) and serfs, whose only privilege was to enjoy during life the lands upon which they lived. Kunes of Treboli, general vicar of the archbishop, wrote a defense of the action of the archbishop, wherein he proved that the Bohemian peasants were free men, not serfs, and showed that the custom was contrary to the laws of the land.

The question was also discussed in the university, and both the German and the Bohemian professors expressed themselves against it, calling it robbery, and saying that those who practiced it could not escape eternal punishment. John Hus and Thomas Stitný also defended the action of the archbishop. The result of this controversy was, that some clerics and quite a number of nobles freed their subjects from this unjust law of decess; but others held to the old custom, and persecuted the peasants in other ways.

The Hussite wars changed the whole aspect of the relation between lord and peasant. The people gained many political rights, and for a time the country was on the high road to democracy. This was all brought to naught by the unfortunate battle of Lipan. From that time the nobles again began to rule the country; and although the people were not brought into subjection immediately, the tendency was in that direction, until in the reign of Vladislav feudalism was fully established in the country, and the people were reduced to the most abject servitude.

Considering that feudalism was found in all European countries long before the fifteenth century, it is not surprising that it found its way to Bohemia at this

time, but rather that the country had withstood it so long.

The reduction of the peasants to servitude brought upon them the greatest suffering. Victorin Vsehrd, an author of a book on the laws of the country, wrote as follows: "This great injustice is done all over the country that the nobles, selling to each other villages, make no written stipulation as to the service expected from the peasants; and because no such stipulation is made, the service demanded is beyond all justice, heavenly, Christian, human, and worldly; so that not even the Turks nor any other heathen are guilty of such cruelty. From this oppression, unheard of before in Bohemia, great evils arise. The people, driven to despair, forsake their lands, and, escaping into the forests, become thieves, robbers, and incendiaries, and perpetrators of other crimes. The land thus becomes desolate, and hard times and famine follow. Others rise in rebellion against their masters, and, forsaking wives and children, betake themselves to the mountains, whence they are ready to sally out armed upon their enemies. Thus it happened not long ago in Moravia, the people rose in rebellion, fell upon their lord, beat him, and wounded him so that he died from the effects of his injuries. And now in Bohemia, in the district of Litomeritz, the people arose against their master, Knight Adam Ploskovsky, on account of excessive and unheard-of service required, and what will come from it is not yet known."

The last-mentioned rebellion refers to that connected with the name of Dalibor, so well known in Bohemian tradition, song, and story.

The peasants of Knight Adam, enduring extreme cruelties, rose in rebellion, took their master prisoner,

and compelled him to give them a written agreement freeing them from his jurisdiction. They then offered their services to Dalibor, of Kozojed, who took them under his protection. But the peasants did not enjoy the fruit of their victory. Dalibor was cited to Prague, tried, and condemned to death. At first he was imprisoned in a new tower just built at Prague, which after that was known by the name of Daliborka. Adam returned to his estates, and the poor peasants were treated more cruelly than before (1496).

This is but one of thousands of cases where the people, attempting to break their chains, found them only the more riveted. It is not surprising that at the time servitude was fully established in Bohemia, the country was full of vagabonds, thieves, and robbers.

That the people of the other European States did not fare any better may be judged from the great peasant uprising in 1525, when no less than 150,000 persons lost their lives, and large tracts of land were left desolate.

KING LOUIS.

The year before Vladislav died, he made an agreement with Maximilian, the Emperor of Germany, which proved very important and far-reaching in its consequences. This was concerning the marriage of his children. Mary, the granddaughter of the emperor, was to be married to Louis, the son of Vladislav; and Anna, the sister of Louis, to Ferdinand, the grandson of that ruler. The stipulation was that, in case of the death of Louis, his sister Anna was to inherit both the crowns of Bohemia and Hungary.

When Louis was twelve years of age, the Hungarians declared his majority, and the Bohemians followed

their example; but first the young king was to come into the country to take the usual oath to preserve the rights and liberties of the realm, since at his coronation he had been too young to do so. Various obstacles being placed in his way, he did not come to Bohemia till 1522. He brought his young wife with him, and asked that she be crowned Queen of Bohemia. The States were quite willing, and grand preparations were made for the ceremony. But the harmony of the occasion was marred by the quarrels between the noblemen as to who should hold the first place in the coronation procession. As there seemed no way of settling the difficulty without offending some of the parties, the king in great wrath ordered the decorations to be torn down and the preparations to cease. In a few days, however, the coronation took place, the difficulty being obviated by the king himself carrying in one hand the scepter, in the other the golden apple, while the queen carried the two golden loaves. The honor of carrying the sword was conferred upon a German nobleman. Even now all did not move on smoothly. The Bohemian nobles, either through shame or anger, would not come to the coronation dinner, which so vexed the youthful sovereign that the queen had all she could do to comfort him.

RISE OF LUTHERANISM IN BOHEMIA.

In a previous chapter it was said that the Diet of Kuttenberg, in 1485, by its wise laws settled for many years the religious troubles in the country; but in 1519 they began anew, bringing endless sufferings to the people. On this occasion the trouble was brought into Bohemia from abroad.

For two years Martin Luther had proclaimed the new doctrines from the University of Wittenberg, and, as might be expected, they soon attracted the attention of the Bohemian people, many of whom at once became his followers.

While Luther held a public disputation at Leipsic, he was called "Čech," a "Hussite," and therefore a heretic. He proved his German parentage, and then added: "I unwittingly taught and believed what John Hus did, as also did John Staupitz; in short, not knowing it ourselves, we are all Hussites. Finally, St. Paul was a Hussite, and St. Augustine also; behold in what a predicament we have found ourselves without the aid of the Bohemians! In my amazement, I know not what to think, seeing this dreadful judgment of God, that evangelical truth, discovered more than a hundred years ago, is burned and condemned to-day, and forbidden to be professed. Woe to the world!"

In the long struggle for the confirmation of the *Compactata*, the Germans were the chief enemies of the Calixtines, and the most devoted adherents of the Pope; but now, when the new doctrine was proclaimed by one of their own nation, they were the first to embrace it. Martin Luther, however, went much farther in his innovations than ever the Calixtines thought of doing. He advocated complete rupture from the Church of Rome, and this was regarded with disfavor by the more moderate sects. As they hated the Bohemian Brethren, calling them Picards, so now they nicknamed the followers of Luther, calling them Lutherans; but notwithstanding all manner of abuse, the Lutherans increased in number to such an extent that both the Catholics and the Calixtines became alarmed, and took counsel

together as to how they might stem the tide of growing heresy. The year 1525 is memorable in the history of the Calixtines, since a reconciliation was effected between them and the Catholics. For eighty years they had striven for the confirmation of the *Compactata*, and all their efforts were in vain. But now, when the Church feared the formation of a new sect, it willingly granted all they asked. The archbishop and the bishops received orders from Rome to ordain without any distinction all candidates for the priesthood, whether they were Catholics or Calixtines. The event was celebrated with many public demonstrations of joy.

It was believed that now the Silesians would gladly accept Utraquism; but they refused, and remained zealous Lutherans.

The Bohemian Brethren also kept increasing in number, so that at this time the Pope's legate wrote to Rome as follows: "The Diet discussed how to extirpate Picardism from Bohemia; but the members of this sect have grown so numerous, they are rich, powerful, and devoted to each other, so that, if only they professed a different faith and had different customs, they might be regarded worthy people."

During the reign of Louis, rich silver-mines were discovered upon the estates of Sir Slick in Loket-sky. A settlement was made at St. Joachimsthal in 1517, where a mint was established, and groats or groschen coined like Rhine guilders. These guilders, coined at the "Thal," were later called thalers, whence the name dollars.

The reign of Louis was disturbed by constant squabbles between the Calixtines and the newly-arisen Lutheran sect. When the Lutherans got into power

they sent quite a number of the priests of the other sect into exile. Finally, through the interference of the king, the exiles were recalled, the Lutheran officers deposed, and the other two sects celebrated the victory.

The short but fairly successful reign of Louis was ended by an unfortunate expedition against the Turks. In 1526, Sultan Soliman made the long expected and feared attack upon Hungary, having an army of some 300,000. King Louis, with a comparatively small army of Hungarians and Bohemians, took the field, and marched to meet the invading host. A disastrous battle was fought at Muhac, where perished about 20,000 Christians, among them King Louis, being drowned while attempting to escape across an overflooded stream. Soliman mourned the untimely death of the young king, saying that he would rather have humbled the pride of the Hungarians than cut short the life of Louis.

About King Louis it was said that everything in his life was before its time. His birth was premature, his marriage when but sixteen, his beard grew before the usual age, his hair turned gray, and his death came when he was but twenty years of age.

CHAPTER VII.

FROM THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE HAPSBURG DYNASTY TO THE REIGN OF MATTHIAS.

FERDINAND I.

ACCORDING to the agreement made between King Vladislav and the Emperor Maximilian, Ferdinand, the grandson of the latter, was to succeed to the Bohemian crown at the death of Louis; but as the Diet had not confirmed the agreement, it refused to acknowledge it, and therefore would not accept Ferdinand as their king. Ferdinand exhausted all his powers of argument and diplomacy in trying to prove his legal right to the throne, both because Vladislav had made the agreement, and because his wife Anna at the death of Louis was the only legitimate heir of Bohemia. His efforts, however, were not successful. Seeing that the Bohemians would not receive him as king on this basis, he changed his plan, and began to work for securing the crown by election. Among the candidates for the throne were the Polish king, the brother of the late King Vladislav, and Louis and William, the Dukes of Bavaria. Ferdinand proved to be the successful candidate, receiving the unanimous vote of the Diet. By this action the delegates showed that they had nothing against Ferdinand himself, but that they objected to the principle he tried to establish.

Thus the Bohemians, by their own free will, chose a member of the house of Hapsburg to rule over them. As Emperor Charles V, the brother of Ferdinand, had

ceded to him Austria, this union of the crown of Bohemia with that of Austria was the beginning of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy; for the Hungarians also chose Ferdinand to be their king. .

At this time the Bohemians were very jealous of their liberties. Before they would consent to elect Ferdinand, they laid before him certain conditions, to which he was obliged to subscribe. Among these the most important was, that the Bohemians, in choosing him, were not influenced by any considerations of hereditary rights, but that they elected him out of their own free will. He further agreed that he would make Prague his capital; that he would take no foreigners as counselors, nor give them offices in Bohemia; and the country was to be preserved in all its ancient rights and liberties. In February, 1527, Ferdinand came to Prague, and both he and Queen Anna were crowned in the palace at Hradschin.

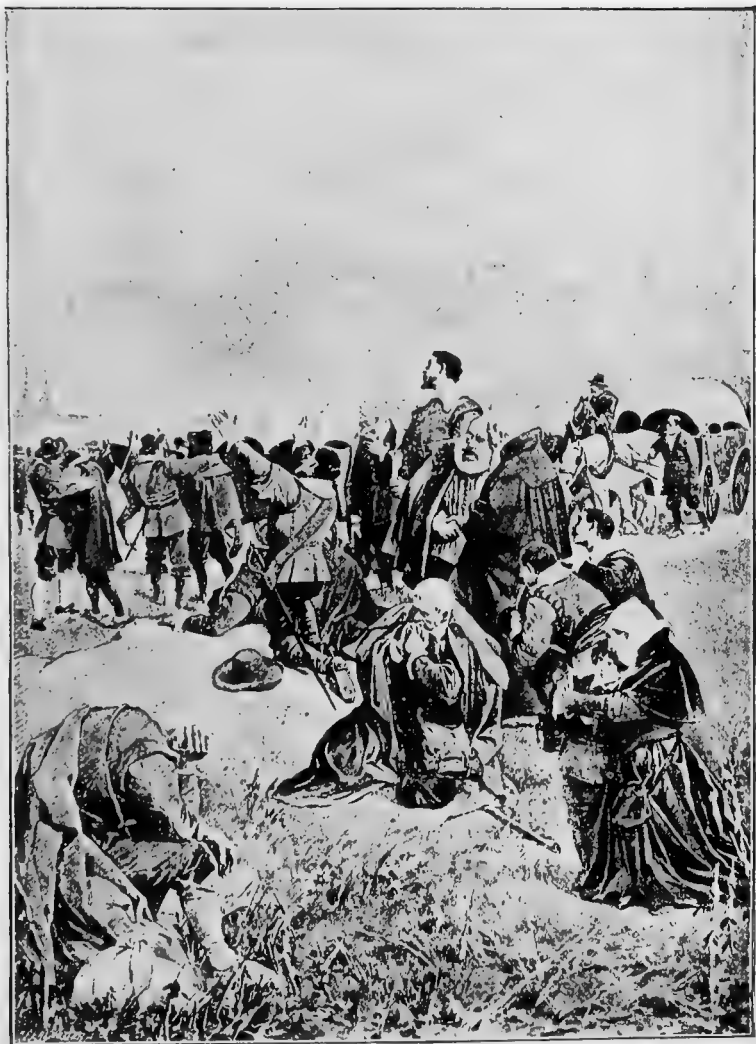
As has already been said, Ferdinand was also elected to the throne of Hungary, thus uniting in his own person the three powers that now form the The Reign of Ferdinand. Austro-Hungarian monarchy. It was not a centralized government, but merely a federal union, each State retaining its own autonomy. But hardly was the new king established in the government when he began to make plans how he might abridge the liberties of his subjects. When Ferdinand ascended the throne of Bohemia he was but twenty-five years of age, but he possessed the traits of a man old in experience. He had a strong will, and was exceedingly politic and crafty. He could conceal his designs, dissimulate, until the favorable moment arrived, when he could carry them into effect.

One of the favorite schemes of Ferdinand, that around which all his plans and aims centered, was to limit the powers of the States, and, if possible, establish an almost absolute monarchy. He was somewhat hindered in this by the continual war with the Turks, but, on the other hand, helped by the religious and political dissensions among the people.

At this time the officers in Prague were composed of Calixtines and Catholics, or, rather, the enemies of the new sect of Lutherans. One of the aldermen, a certain Pasek, who seemed to take the lead in affairs, perceiving that Ferdinand did not look with favor upon the new sect, began to persecute its adherents to such an extent that several were put to death by fire. Many were exiled from Prague. Ferdinand, not being pleased that a common citizen should arrogate to himself so much power, took up the cause of the persecuted, and ordered Pasek to recall the exiled citizens; and when he refused to obey, he was deprived of his office. The king also embraced this opportunity to break up the newly-formed union between the Old Town and New Town of Prague. The Lutherans returned to their homes, praising the justice of their king, which praise, however, proved untimely, as further developments prove.

Another method of abridging the liberties of the people, was the prohibition of the General Assemblies that were wont to be called by the citizens, unless they had obtained the express permission of the king.

In 1531, through the influence of his brother, Charles V, Ferdinand was elected, in Cologne-on-the-Rhine, King of the Romans, and therefore successor to the Imperial throne.



RETURN OF THE BOHEMIAN EXILES.

The constant wars with the Turks gave Ferdinand a plausible excuse for making frequent calls upon the States for special taxation, who, intimidated by his strong will and energy of character, dared not oppose him. In this way the money carried out of the country amounted to such vast sums that there was scarcely enough left to defray the expenses of the home government. There was, however, one redeeming feature in this arbitrary form of government. Ferdinand succeeded better than his predecessors in curbing the proud nobles, and bringing law and order into the land. With law and personal security came also prosperity; consequently the people did not murmur much, even though they were obliged to pay exorbitant taxes to enable their king to carry on a war in which, as a nation, they had no interest.

Lutheranism spread so rapidly in Bohemia that its adherents, called Evangelicals, soon became the strongest sect in the country. King Ferdinand hated this sect, and his taking them under The Religious Question. his protection against the persecution of Pasek was done from political, not religious motives. As soon as he could find any plausible pretense, he tried to repress their growth. This, however, was quite a difficult undertaking. He could, to some extent, abridge the rights of the Evangelicals in Prague and in other royal cities, but he had no power to do so upon the estates of the nobility. He determined to oppose them in their Church organization, which, at this time, they were trying to bring to some permanent form. Thus far they had allied themselves with the Calixtines, then recognized as one of the State Churches; and, being in the majority, they tried to give this Church

such an organization as agreed with the advanced views of the Lutherans. But Ferdinand insisted that they regulate their Church according to the *Compactata*, or withdraw from the union with the Utraquists. They, on the other hand, claimed that the time had come when they should be governed, not by the *Compactata*, but by the Word of God. As no conclusion could be reached, the matter was referred to a General Diet. This Diet, meeting in Prague in 1537, had all the sects represented except the Bohemian Brethren, who, on account of the austerity of their lives, were equally despised by both Catholics and Calixtines.

The Diet accomplished nothing. The Evangelicals insisted on the right of the States to elect their archbishop; and, as there was a strong probability that he would be of their sect, the king opposed this, and the Diet was dissolved, all the sects remaining under the authority of the Catholic archbishop.

In the year 1541 a terrible misfortune befell the city of Prague. A fire broke out, and spread with such rapidity that almost the whole of the The Small Side Burned. Small Side was reduced to ashes. The royal palace, the St. Vitus Cathedral, then building, and almost all the private residences in the lower part of the town were in ruins. The greatest misfortune connected with this conflagration was the destruction of the public records. The news of this loss filled the minds of the people with consternation; for, in many cases, their rights and liberties were dependent upon these records, and they knew that they would soon be deprived of them, if no proof could be brought forward that they had once been granted.

When the new records were made out, it was agreed

that two copies should be drawn up; but this was never done. King Ferdinand embraced this opportunity to establish his hereditary power in Bohemia. He asked the States to place in the new records, not that he had been elected their king, as was really the case, but that he had been accepted; and, having already felt his strong arm, they had not the courage to disobey him.

Besides the destruction of the Small Side, another grievous misfortune fell upon the country. The silver-mines of Kuttenberg became filled with water. The king, not willing to invest money for their repair, they remained in ruins, and thus this city, once the second in the kingdom and the source of great wealth to the nation, now became neglected, and never again regained its glory.

Religious dissensions continually increased in Germany until it was evident that nothing but the sword could settle the difficulty. The Emperor Charles V was the deadly enemy of all re-
States in opposition to Ferdinand.
 ligious progress, and sought in all possible ways to place obstacles in its path. The Protestant princes, in order to be better able to defend their faith, formed a union called the Smalkald League, at the head of which were Hans Frederick, the Elector of Saxony, and Philip, the Landgrave of Hesse. The war that followed was the beginning of a long series of troubles, arising between Ferdinand and his Bohemian subjects. Desiring to aid his brother, the king asked the Diet to vote a subsidy to raise troops, saying that he wished to have an armed force ready in case the country should be invaded by the Elector.

The Diet complied with his request; but when the

army was collected and equipped, the king, in direct opposition to the laws of the country, ordered it to march out of the country against the Elector. The officers, however, refused obedience, saying that no other authority except the State Diet could order them to lead their troops out of the country. Most of them returned home, and only a small part followed the king. This so enraged Ferdinand that he determined to mete out to them signal punishment. Some were fined, some imprisoned, and the king even went so far as to order one to be beheaded. There is no knowing to what extremes his wrath would have led him, had not his queen interceded in behalf of the offenders. This good Queen Anna unfortunately died soon after (January, 1547), and the Bohemians lost a faithful friend, who doubtless would have averted many of the misfortunes that befell the country.

In the beginning of the year 1547, Ferdinand issued a proclamation asking the States to be prepared to go out with him to aid the emperor in the war against the Smalkald League. Such a document, issued without the sanction of the States assembled in a Diet, was a direct violation of the laws of the nation; consequently they refused to comply with the request. Still many of the lords met their sovereign in Litomeritz to discuss the question, and, if possible, come to some agreement. The king, being under great pressure, excused the omission of calling the Diet on account of the urgency of the case, and, further to conciliate his subjects, left it to their own free will whether they should help him with money or follow his standards against his enemies. Nevertheless, the proclamation caused a great deal of uneasiness in

Struggle between Ferdinand and the States continued.

the minds of many of the more thoughtful citizens, who feared that he might again presume to violate their liberties.

Pressed by the murmuring citizens of Prague, the aldermen of the three towns called a great assembly, where a union was formed, whose purpose was to defend the liberties of the realm. Being joined by many Calixtine lords and knights, they drew up a memorial asking the king to renounce all that he had gained in the twenty years of his reign that was in any way prejudicial to the liberties of the country, especially the clause granted in 1545, establishing the hereditary of the crown of Bohemia in the house of Austria. Messengers were sent to all parts of Bohemia, Moravia, Silesia, and Lusatia, asking the States to join the union made at Prague.

The States then asked Ferdinand to call a Diet, in order that the difficulty might be settled. Fearing the consequences of openly opposing the union, he consented, and the proposed Diet met just after Christmas the following year.

While the Diet was in session, and the country had reason to hope much good would be accomplished, news came to Prague that struck a panic into the hearts of those who had joined the union. The two leaders in the Smalkald League were taken prisoners by the emperor. The members of the Diet, instead of considering what might be done to avert the threatening danger, thought only of their own safety. Some fled to their own estates, while those that remained in the city prepared a humble apology to the king. Ferdinand received the messengers with apparent kindness, but demanded the immediate dissolution of the union, since

it was treason against the country and an insult to the dignity of the crown.

The delegates refused to do this, but instead, placed the memorial in the records of the nation, sending a new delegation with new excuses to the king.

The design of Ferdinand, now that he had the country at a disadvantage, was to bring it into complete subjection to his authority ; but fearing lest too severe measures might arouse the nation to a desperate struggle, he decided to use his power against the cities only, sparing both the lords and the knights.

After the defeat of the armies of the Smalkald League, Ferdinand came to Prague with a large army, taking possession of the fortification at Hradschin, which commanded the whole city. Having thus gained control of Prague, he issued warrants to six hundred of the more prominent citizens, citing them to appear before him the 8th of June to be tried.

At first they refused to comply with the demand ; but upon being assured that they should return to their homes without the loss of life or limb, they finally decided to obey the summons. On the appointed day they therefore made their appearance at Hradschin. The king awaited them, seated upon an elevated throne and surrounded by his princes, bishops, and dignitaries of the whole realm. When the prisoners appeared, the public crier read to them the charges of treason made against them ; upon which they fell upon their knees, beseeching his majesty to pardon them, and imploring the lords and prelates to intercede in their behalf. Contrary to his promise, the king prepared to take signal vengeance upon the unfortunate six hundred, who had dared to question his authority. This

punishment was not aimed so much against the individuals as against the cities. They were to give up all the privileges granted them by his predecessors, all their firearms and other munitions of war, all the wealth recently bequeathed them by the wealthy citizen Arnold, and to agree to pay into the royal treasury duty upon every barrel of beer that was brewed. In addition to this, Ferdinand decided to inflict special punishment upon all those whom he deemed the most guilty. Some were held as hostages until the towns of Prague should fulfill the demands of the king; some were shut up in filthy dungeons, some tortured so cruelly that they died from the effects of their injuries, and some so maltreated that they lost their reason. Other cities that had joined the union were similarly treated; and further to strike terror into the hearts of all, two knights and two citizens were condemned to death.

After the court closed, Ferdinand called a Diet to meet on the 20th of August. This Diet was opened by the execution of the four prisoners, and hence is known in history as the "Bloody ^{The Bloody Diet.} Diet." Some of the prisoners being heavily fined, while others were publicly whipped, the king then proceeded to business. He renounced some of the privileges that he had before deprived the cities of, but only such as were not at all prejudicial to his own power.

To rivet further his chains upon the unfortunate cities, he appointed two classes of police officers—the lower called richters, or squires; the higher, lieutenants. No public meeting could be held without their permission; and, this being secured, all proceedings were to be carried on in their presence. They also had

jurisdiction in judicial questions, and were the direct spies of the government.

At the "Bloody Diet" an edict was issued against the Bohemian Brethren, who, by their firm adherence to the union, had brought upon themselves the displeasure of the king. Their churches were closed, and they were ordered either to join one of the State Churches, or to leave the country. Many of them found refuge in Poland and Prussia. John Augusta, their bishop, was seized and cast into prison, where he was confined for sixteen years.

The Diet being closed, the king, leaving his second son as regent, repaired to Augsburg where an Imperial Diet was held. In this Diet, the Emperor Charles, together with the princes of the empire, asked that Bohemia contribute her quota of taxation for the government of the empire; but Ferdinand opposed this with much energy, proving that his kingdom was entirely independent of the German States, and hence under no obligation to bear any of their burdens.

In the Diet held in Prague in 1549, Ferdinand induced the States to declare his first-born son, Maximilian, heir of the Bohemian crown. One of the clauses in the agreement shows the decline of the liberties of the kingdom. When Ferdinand was elected, he agreed to make Prague his capital; but now this clause was so modified, that Prague was to be the home of the sovereign, as far as it was convenient, and when important business made it necessary for him to dwell outside the kingdom, to live as near as possible, thus pointing to Vienna as the future capital of the Austrian rulers.

Being successful in his political plans, Ferdinand

decided to carry out his designs of Catholicizing the people. By granting numerous favors, he succeeded in converting to his views some ^{Ferdinand's Religious Policy.} of the leaders among the Lutherans, and they subscribed to the innovations introduced by him. But when the matter was laid before the university, that body condemned the action as unscriptural. As Ferdinand just then had the Turkish war on his hands, for which he needed men and money from Bohemia, he dared not press his views too strongly, lest there should be an open rupture with the Diet, in which case he would have experienced some difficulty in securing the desired aid.

About this time the German princes gained a glorious victory, which freed them forever from the dominion of the Pope. This so encouraged the Protestants in Bohemia that they deposed the officers that had approved of the measures of Ferdinand, and appointed others who were known to be friendly to the most advanced views of the reformers.

Ferdinand, seeing that he could do nothing to prevent the spread of Protestantism by open measures, decided to work in another way. He invited into Bohemia large numbers of the newly-founded order of the Jesuits, to whom he gave the monastery of St. Clement in Prague. Here they established two colleges—one of theology, and one of philosophy. In course of time, these became formidable rivals to the old colleges of the Carolinum; for the Jesuits, with the zeal of a newly-organized order, spared no pains to win pupils, and, once within the walls of their college, they were not suffered to depart until they had been converted to the old faith.

From the year 1547, King Ferdinand spent most of his time outside of Bohemia, either carrying on the war against the Turks, or attending to the duties of the empire, having been elected to the imperial crown after the resignation of his brother, Charles V. During his absence, his second son was regent; for, although Maximilian had already been declared his successor, he regarded him with distrust on account of his leaning to the teachings of the Bohemian Brethren, and it was not till many years later, when he had modified his religious views, that his father received him into favor.

In the year 1560, Maximilian, as the younger king of Bohemia, came to Prague with his wife, the daughter of Charles V, and was crowned with great honor. Shortly after, he was also crowned as King of the Romans.

During his whole reign, Ferdinand never relinquished his design of undermining the power of the Protestants and strengthening the Catholics. To weaken the Evangelicals, he succeeded in establishing a firm union between the two established Churches, by obtaining permission from Pope Pius IV to have communion in both kinds given in the Catholic Churches. The news of this concession was proclaimed with great solemnity and glory by the archbishop himself, and the Jesuits of St. Clement immediately proceeded to give both bread and wine to their communicants. Ferdinand anticipated great things from this step on the part of the Church; but he did not live to rejoice in the results. He died the following year (1564). His remains were taken to Prague, and buried in the royal tomb in St. Vitus Cathedral.

The one motive that seemed to actuate this ruler was to raise the royal prerogative upon the ruins of civil and religious liberty. In the former he was successful, but not in the latter. Still he paved the way for future rulers, and gave a direction to the government that was followed by them, and ultimately brought the country to ruin.

The only good thing in his government was that there was order and security, and that, on the whole, the common people were prosperous.

MAXIMILIAN.

At the death of Ferdinand, his son Maximilian assumed the government of Bohemia. Besides this, he received as his inheritance both Upper and Lower Austria, was elected King of Hungary and Emperor of Germany. His brother Ferdinand received the government of Tyrol, and Charles that of Switzerland and Carinthia.

From Maximilian's known inclination to Protestantism, the Evangelicals, as well as the other Protestant sects, expected great things, but they were disappointed in their hopes. The Hapsburg rulers were so hemmed in by outside powers that they could show no favor to the Protestants, even if they had desired to do so. The elder branch of the house ruled in Spain, where they often were obliged to seek aid against the Turks and the neighboring German princes; and the support gained from the Pope could not, at this early day, be despised. Maximilian, therefore, could not become a Protestant; but he determined to grant as much liberty of conscience as he dared without incurring the displeasure of the Pope. He tried to establish unity

among the various Protestant sects, but found them far more intolerant of each other than he had expected. As his father had gained a great deal by allowing the cup to be used at communion in the Catholic churches, so Maximilian thought that much might be gained if the Catholic priests were allowed to marry. But here he found Rome so obstinate that he was obliged to abandon the design.

The Protestants, greatly encouraged, now asked for the revocation of the *Compactata*, and that henceforth the Word of God should be the sole guide in matters of faith. This being granted, they now begged that the Consistory be chosen anew by themselves. As this doubtless would have given the majority to the more advanced Protestants, the king refused it, not wishing to infringe upon the rights of the Calixtines. The new sects, however, did not allow themselves to be baffled in their purpose. For a while they were silent, waiting to bring forward their claims when a more favorable moment should arrive.

In 1575 a Diet was convened at Prague, at which the king asked two favors; he needed a much larger subsidy than usual to defray the expenses of the government, and he wanted his son Rudolph to be declared his successor. The Diet, in which the majority of the members were Protestants, refused to take these questions into consideration until the king should allow them to elect their own Consistory, and grant them permission to be governed by the Confession of Faith drawn up by the Evangelicals and the Moravian Brethren. Maximilian was quite willing to make these concessions, knowing that by so doing he would secure from

the Diet what he desired ; but he dared not do so without the consent of the Pope.

Messengers were immediately sent to Rome, and eight months elapsed before they returned with the unwelcome news that the Church would never consent to such innovations. This threw the king in a great dilemma ; it was equally perilous either to grant or refuse the request of the Diet. He therefore determined to seek safety in a compromise. The churches were granted the privilege of electing "Defenders," who should guard their rights, and by whom they were to be governed in matters of faith. As this virtually removed the new churches from the authority of the old Consistory, the Diet was satisfied, and willing to acquiesce in the demands of their sovereign ; and accordingly the desired subsidy was voted, and Rudolph was declared the rightful heir of the Bohemian crown.

During the brief reign of Maximilian, the Bohemians gained much religious liberty, and Protestantism greatly increased in strength and numbers. The more progressive people looked with great hopes to the future ; but, unfortunately, their good king, long in feeble health, died after a reign of but three years, being in his fifty-eighth year.

RUDOLPH II.

Rudolph II, who succeeded Maximilian both as king and emperor, did not resemble his father either in nobility of character or enlightenment of mind. Educated in Spain by the Jesuits, he was intolerant even from childhood. His mind, naturally gloomy and dull, was not at all brightened by the mass of

superstition that formed the bulk of his education. Still he possessed a taste for many occupations, that in a private man would have been commendable; but in a sovereign, who, on their account, neglected the weightier duties of the State, they were not only unde-



RUDOLPH II.

sirable but positively injurious. He spent much of his time in painting, carving, and in studying alchemy and astrology. The one redeeming feature in this was that he gave considerable encouragement to artists, sculptors, and scholars of all kinds. Tycho Brahe, being persecuted in his own country, found refuge at the court of Rudolph; and the distinguished Kepler also

found there better opportunities to pursue his astronomical investigations than in Prussia.

Rudolph never married, but had an unacknowledged wife and several children, of whom he was very fond. Still he was not loyal to his family, his private character being anything but exemplary.

As soon as Rudolph became king, he made Prague his capital, and thus it also became the center of the imperial power of Germany. In those days Prague presented a gay appearance, containing, as it did, many foreign ambassadors with their splendid retinues and resident noblemen, who vied with each other in the magnificence of their establishments. Rudolph increased the effect by importing into the city works of art, curiosities, and even curious plants and animals.

But as far as government was concerned, that was sadly neglected. The king, too indolent to carry it on himself, and too suspicious to intrust it to some men of ability, managed matters in some sort of way himself, as he imagined, when in reality he was the mere puppet in the hands of some wily favorite, who in his turn was a willing tool of Spain and the Jesuits. Indeed, matters came to such a pass that even ambassadors from great nations could not obtain a hearing before the emperor unless they first bribed the favorite then in power. Often measures of great moment were passed without the knowledge of the king; for the older he grew, the more he shunned all intercourse with the world.

In course of time the Jesuits succeeded in getting the government entirely into the hands of Catholics, to the great prejudice of the Protestants, who constituted the bulk of the population. At this time the Catholics con-

stituted about one-twentieth of all the people, and therefore it can be seen how unjust it was to allow them to manage affairs entirely to their own interests.

Although the Jesuits did all in their power to gain influence and start an anti-Protestant current of thought, there was little change until the death of Sir William of Rosenberg, the Burggrave of Prague. This nobleman, although a Catholic and devoted to his sovereign, was nevertheless so zealous a patriot that he would sanction nothing that could in any way compromise the liberties of any of the people of the kingdom. But when Sir William died, the chief power was obtained by several men who had been the pupils of the Jesuits; among these the most prominent being George of Lobkovic, Jaroslav of Martinic, and William Slavata, two of whom figure so prominently at the beginning of the 'Thirty Years' War. In Moravia the most zealous workers for the spread of Catholicism were Cardinal Dietrichstein, the Bishop of Olmutz, and Sir Charles of Lichtenstein. These noblemen and prelates began the work of conversion to Catholicism by forcibly shutting up the churches of the Protestants upon their estates, and by compelling the members, by whippings, fines, and other persecutions, to attend mass in the Catholic churches. Their example was followed by other Catholic lords, till, on some occasions, the people driven to despair, turned upon their oppressors, and bloody skirmishes were the result. No redress could be obtained for this injustice; for the perpetrators were rather praised than punished, since they showed such zeal in reclaiming people to the true faith.

The king's gloomy temperament constantly in-

creased until his mind gave way to insanity. The first appearance of this was in 1600, when he imagined that conspirators were about him trying to take his life. This state of his mind continued many months; but when negotiations were afoot with the Pope and with Spain about appointing his oldest brother Matthias his successor, he suddenly recovered and resumed the government. This attack of insanity was followed by others; but in the intervals his mind seemed to be clear, and he would by no means consent to give up the crown.

Rudolph insane.

By the exertions of the more zealous Catholics, an edict was passed against the Picards, as the Moravian Brethren were called by their enemies. Their chief church in New Boleslav was taken from them, and they were persecuted in many other ways. The Evangelicals were alarmed by this action, seeing in it a portent as to what they themselves might expect, but they were powerless to avert it. The Catholics, however, were content to make haste slowly, knowing that if matters went on as they did, they would soon be able to advance a step further. They were also encouraged in this belief by what took place in Styria.

The Anti-reformation.

In the first years of the reign of Rudolph, Styria was governed by Archduke Maximilian, the brother of the king. He ruled all classes with justice and moderation; consequently the Protestants increased in numbers and strength. But all this was changed when, at the death of the archduke, his son Ferdinand, a pupil of the Jesuits, succeeded his father in the government. He abrogated all the privileges that had been granted to the Protestants, drove their clergy out of the country,

putting Catholic priests in their places. Thus within a short time he succeeded in changing his almost Protestant dominion into a Catholic one, where the most favored class of people were the Jesuits. Having this example before them, the more zealous Catholics resolved to secure the same results in their own land; but as Bohemia did not seem quite ripe for any radical measures, they decided to begin the work of reform, or rather persecution, in Silesia and Hungary.

The Hungarians were especially unfortunate in being the object of the king's persecution. Not content that he had encroached so much upon their liberties as to divide their kingdom into three parts, he called a Diet at Pressburg, where he had the audacity to ask that they all come back to the Catholic faith, drive their clergymen out of the country, and replace them by Catholic priests. This unreasonable demand drove them into revolt. They chose as their leader Stephen Boskay, a wealthy noble of Transylvania, who had sought redress in Prague, but in vain. An alliance was made with the Turks, and a new war began, more cruel than those that had preceded it. As Rudolph could not withstand the united power of the Turks and the Hungarians, he gave his brother Matthias authority to make peace, which when the latter with great difficulty succeeded in securing, the king refused to confirm it, objecting to the clause granting religious liberty.

In the danger that threatened the country unless the treaty of peace were ratified, Matthias called all the members of the house of Austria to a consultation in Vienna. They elected him their head, giving him full authority to take such measures as he saw fit to ward off the coming storm.

Matthias
against
Rudolph.

From that time Matthias began to work openly to induce the king to resign the government into his hands. With this end in view, he spared no pains to win the favor of both Bohemian and Moravian lords and prelates. He was the more successful in this on account of the increased illness of the king, whose insanity at this time (1608) had reached its worst form, rendering him a raving maniac, who tried not only to take his own life, but laid violent hands upon any one who happened to be near him when the fit seized him. As the king's condition seemed hopeless, both Protestants and Catholics looked to Matthias as the one who alone could bring safety and stability to the government. Thus it was that he had among his adherents Charles of Lichtenstein, the most fanatical of all the Catholics, and Charles of Zerotin, of Moravia, one of the most zealous members of the Church of the Moravian Brethren.

The favorable moment having arrived, Matthias called a Diet at Pressburg, to be composed of delegates both from Upper and Lower Austria, and from Hungary. At this Diet it was decided to guard the peace that had been made with the Turks. On his own responsibility, Matthias appointed a Diet to meet at Ivancic, Moravia, hoping that thus both the Bohemians and the Moravians would join the confederation. These proceedings alarmed Rudolph, and he consented to ratify the Turkish peace. But it was too late. Matthias proceeded with the Diet, and there the States promised to stand by each other, not only for the peace with the Turks, but for every other measure that was just and proper. Matthias then organized a temporary government, placing Charles of Lichtenstein at its

head, and the Moravians began to call themselves "the faithful subjects of Matthias."

Matthias now tried to carry out the same plan in Bohemia, and accordingly appointed a Diet to meet at Caslau, himself starting for the country with an army of 25,000 men.

Rudolph, now greatly alarmed, called a Diet to meet at Prague, and the States readily responded to the call, while but a very small number made their appearance at Caslau. The king asked aid of the Diet against his brother, who evidently intended to usurp all his power. The States now decided to turn the dilemma of the king to their own advantage; and therefore, before they would consent to discuss the need of the hour, they drew up a series of articles demanding a guarantee for full liberty of conscience. These resolutions bore the signatures of all the higher States professing the Protestant faith, and also of the royal cities, with the exception of Kodan, Budweis, and Pilsen. Sorely pressed, Rudolph agreed to all the articles except two, that provided for full liberty of conscience to all, irrespective of the class to which they belonged. The Diet then voted men and supplies to aid the king against Matthias.

The army of Rudolph soon equaled in numbers that of Matthias; still the latter marched into the country until within a mile from Prague. The two brothers then began to treat for peace. With the consent of the Bohemian States, Rudolph ceded to Matthias the government of Hungary, the whole of Austria, and Moravia, and recommended him to the States as his successor.

Matthias, returning to his government as the vic-

tor, convoked a Diet to meet at Brünn, where the Moravian lords should do him homage. The Protestants asked some guarantee that their rights and privileges would be respected; but they could obtain no concessions from their new sovereign, and were obliged to be contented with the promise that things would remain as they were.

As had been agreed upon between Rudolph and the States, a Diet was called in January, 1609, in which the chief question to be settled was that of religion. After endless negotiations, the king declared that he should violate his coronation oath, and act contrary to the time-honored custom among Catholic princes, did he give his protection to other than the two acknowledged sects, the Catholic and Calixtine. With this he pronounced the question of religion settled, and asked the Diet to proceed to other business, which when it delayed to do, he declared it adjourned. The Diet of
1609.

This decision caused great commotion, not only among the members of the Diet, but also among the people of Prague. The Protestant delegates armed themselves, and marched to the city hall of New Town, followed by an immense concourse of people, armed with such weapons as they could seize. The king hearing of this uprising, sent messengers to pacify the excited people, promising to call a new Diet, where the religious question would be settled. This concession on the part of the king, was made against the wishes of his Jesuitical advisers, Zdenek Popel of Lobkovic, William Slavata, and Jaroslav of Martinec, who thus greatly incensed the people against themselves.

When the new Diet met, Rudolph resorted to his

old method of procrastination. Finally, when he could find no other pretext for refusing the demands of the Diet, he said he must refer the matter to the electors of the empire. As such a proceeding would have compromised the independence of the Bohemian kingdom, the States determined to resort to arms to defend both their religious and political liberties. A body of thirty directors were elected, who were to have the government in their hands and immediately raise an army for the common defense. The leaders in this revolt were the Count of Thurn, Linhard of Fels, and John of Bubna. The States of Silesia also joined this league.

Rudolph, perceiving that the States were determined to proceed to extreme measures, with a great deal of reluctance, finally consented to their demands.

Accordingly, he issued his famous *Letter of Majesty*, July 9, 1609. By this document the Bohemian Confession of Faith was confirmed, the Consistory and the university were placed under the control of the Protestants, and defenders were appointed to watch over the interests of both.

When the *Letter of Majesty* was presented for signature to the chief chancellor, Popel of Lobkovic, he declined to sign it, saying he could not do so without doing violence to his conscience. In his place, the Burggrave of Prague, Adam of Sternberg, affixed his seal.

By the *Letter of Majesty* a complete union was effected between the Moravian Brethren and the Evangelicals, both in matters of faith and in Church organization. The administrators in the Consistory were, one professing the Evangelical faith, and one belonging to

the Brethren. Some of the other provisions of this document were, that the States might build schools and churches upon their lands, but were not allowed to compel their subjects to attend either; the lords and knights were to have the privilege to call to their Churches priests ordained either according to the old Utraquist system, or according to the new; in the royal cities, and upon the crown estates, the citizens were to enjoy the privilege of building churches wherein the worship should be either Catholic or Protestant as they wished.

Then Rudolph proclaimed an amnesty, whereby he declared that no one should be held to answer for participation in the above defense of their rights. This amnesty was signed also by the Catholic lords, except by the three above mentioned, the chief chancellor, Slavata, and Martinec. Upon the refusal of these lords to sign the amnesty, the States entered a protest in the public records, that in the future, should any one do anything to violate the provisions of the *Letter of Majesty*, the three lords would be looked to as the cause, since in refusing to sign the amnesty they showed themselves to be the enemies of peace and harmony. The Silesians also gained similar liberties to the Bohemians. This business being settled, the States dismissed their forces, and proceeded to the other questions, and for a while it seemed that peace and harmony were restored to the land.

The loss of so many possessions weighed heavily upon the mind of Rudolph, and he constantly thought how he might regain them. He first turned to the electors of the empire, but gained nothing there except that Matthias should acknowledge

Rudolph's
Plots.

him his liege lord. He then appealed for help to Archduke Leopold, the younger brother of Ferdinand of Styria. Leopold was a daring young man, who, although destined for a clerical life and already possessing two bishoprics, that of Passau and Strasburg, nevertheless was eager to embark in any enterprise that might win him glory.

With the sanction of Spain, that of Archduke Charles and other princes, Rudolph entered into an agreement with Leopold, whereby that prince was to humble the States of Bohemia, to nullify the *Letter of Majesty* and take vengeance upon its authors, get himself declared the successor of Matthias, and compel him to restore his dominions to his brother.

Leopold was so far successful in his plans that, partly by force and partly by artifice, he succeeded in gaining possession of Budweis, Krumlov, Pisek, Tabor, and several other cities, and finally took stand upon the White Mountain, about three miles from Prague.

As soon as the Protestant States saw the proceedings of the armies of Leopold, they met in Prague and asked the king the meaning of this invasion. To satisfy them, he ordered the army of Leopold to leave the country; but knowing his wishes, instead of departing, they advanced to the Small Side, and made preparations to force their way into the Old Town. About two thousand of them succeeded in crossing the bridge, but the gate was closed behind them, and most of them were slain. A report was spread among the people that many of the invaders had obtained refuge in the convents, whereupon these places were attacked by the enraged people, the monks murdered, and the houses plundered of their goods.

The king, feeling confident of victory, ordered the Old and the New Towns to open their gates to the invaders and take an oath that they would join the side of Leopold to serve their emperor against every opponent; which when they refused to do, he had the cannon set up so as to have the whole city at his mercy.

In this extremity, the States fitted out an embassy to Matthias, asking him to come to defend them against their oppressors. They also sent for aid to Moravia, and hastened to raise all the troops they could upon their own estates. The army of the people increased day by day, and when a force of 8,000 Hungarians reached Prague, the invaders became alarmed and fled from the city. But it was too late; they were pursued, and thousands of them overtaken and slain.

Rudolph was now left to his fate. The Protestant States, learning wisdom by experience, refused to stand by a prince who was but a toy in the hands of their enemies, and whose given word could not be trusted.

As soon as the invaders had left the country, Count Thurn surrounded the Hradschin so as to prevent the escape of the king. In the meantime, Matthias arrived at Prague, being received with great honor. Rudolph was compelled to abdicate in favor of his brother, giving up to him the rest of his possessions. Matthias was received as king by the States, and crowned, after confirming all the liberties of the kingdom.

The deposed king was given a residence in the citadel of Prague, where he died of grief in less than a year, being then in the sixtieth year of his age.

Some time after these events, Matthias was crowned at Frankfort as Emperor of Germany (1612).

CHAPTER VIII.

FROM MATTHIAS TO THE CLOSE OF THE THIRTY YEARS' WAR.

MATTHIAS.

THE reign of Matthias is memorable as the time when Bohemia was plunged into a series of disturbances that ultimately deprived her of her independence, and, indeed, almost of her existence. Before entering on the political history of the time, it will be well to look upon the condition of the country at the beginning of this reign.

In the beginning of the seventeenth century, the kingdom of Bohemia included Moravia, Silesia, and both Upper and Lower Lusatia. Thus, although the kingdom in regard to territorial extent was not to be despised, its political importance was greatly augmented by its being the center of government of the Austrian rulers, who, as kings of Bohemia, generally made Prague their capital, especially as most of them were also Kings of Hungary, and some Emperors of Germany.

In the early history of the country, there were four ruling classes or States in the kingdom, consisting of the lords, knights, citizens and clergy; but after the Hussite wars the clergy were excluded, although this was contrary to the custom in all the neighboring States.

There were some 254 families of the nobility, 1,128 knights. These, together with the representative citi-

zens, had the privilege of attending the Diet; but the number that embraced this privilege generally did not exceed 200. The voting was done by the States. A measure, to become a law, needed the signature of the king and the agreement of the three States. To them also belonged the exclusive right of raising troops and voting taxes. The king's income consisted of revenue derived from the royal cities, which, at their foundation, agreed to pay certain duties and taxes for the special privileges that they enjoyed. Whenever the king needed more money to carry on war, or for some other purpose, he asked the States to vote a subsidy, which was generally done, unless he himself refused to grant requests which they made. These special requests were generally made at the Diet, which was called whenever it seemed necessary. The usual time of the sittings of the Diet was two weeks; but in times of war or during civil troubles it lasted much longer, and sometimes was called three times a year. During the reign of the rulers of the house of Hapsburg there was a continual struggle between the rulers and the Diets as to which should be supreme, and gradually the royal power increased in strength, to the great detriment of the States.

The condition of the peasantry at this time was better than two centuries later. The amount of service due their lords was not excessive, so that they had time to till their own fields and at-
Condition of the Peasants.
tend to other tasks. That their condition was not so wretched as during the reign of Vladislav can be judged from the fact that in all the villages there were public baths, and on Saturdays the hours of labor were shortened, so that the people could avail themselves of these privileges against the coming Sunday.

The peasants had their own local government. They held two courts annually, the judges being composed partly of peasants and partly of citizens. These courts were opened with great honor and formality. It must be admitted that these courts had jurisdiction only in unimportant cases, the more important ones coming under the authority of the nobility, or lords of the estates upon which the peasants lived.

Among the various sects the Brethren were more respected than the others, on account of their consistent lives and the integrity of their character. The other sects constantly quarreled among themselves because of difference in belief; but the Brethren avoided empty discussions, their chief aim being to cultivate brotherly love, peace, and mutual helpfulness.

In regard to the question of marriage, there did not seem to be any uniformity of practice. In some parishes the people insisted that their ministers marry, while in others they were forbidden to do so.

The Protestant sects, however, agreed in one thing: there was no promotion among the clergy; all were equal, and had an equal voice in determining questions arising in the Church government.

It has been estimated that, during the reign of Rudolph, about nineteen-twentieths of the population was Protestant and the rest Catholics.

THE REIGN OF MATTHIAS.

The Bohemians, in accepting the government of Matthias in place of that of his brother, expected to improve their condition, but in this they were greatly disappointed. They soon found to their sorrow that

he had no more independence of character than Rudolph; and was, moreover, under the same Jesuit-Spanish influence. The energy he had displayed in usurping his brother's throne was not so much the result of his own will, but was due to the ability of his advisers, who hoped by a change in the government to serve their own ends. It was true that some of the Protestant lords obtained positions in the government; for example, Count Thurn was appointed to fill the office of Burggrave of Carlstein; but their united power was no match for that of their more numerous, crafty, and unscrupulous enemies, at whose head was the chief chancellor, Zdenek Popel of Lobkovic. As soon as Matthias found that he no longer needed the Protestant lords, he was easily convinced that they were the main obstacle to his carrying on the government in his own way. Thus, in a short time after his accession to the throne, matters glided into the old channels, and the anti-Protestant party managed matters as they had done before.

The Catholic prelates and authorities constantly aimed to provoke the Protestants to some open act of violence, so as to give the king a pretext for depriving them of the *Letter of Majesty*. This was not only the case in Bohemia, but in other countries as well. As might be expected, having common grievances, the more prominent men of Bohemia, Austria, and Hungary sought to come to some understanding as to the remedy. There was also much secret correspondence between the lords of Bohemia and the Protestant princes of Germany. The hopes of the Protestants that some change would be made received consider-

able encouragement from Savoy and Holland, which countries were waging war against the Spanish branch of the house of Hapsburg.

The war with the Turks having again broken out, Matthias convoked a Diet of all the Austrian States to meet at Linz in 1614. This Diet failed of its object; for the king, refusing to allow the members to discuss any other question than the Turkish war, was obliged to adjourn it without having received any subsidy.

The following year a General Diet was held in Prague, which in some respects was quite noteworthy. Here also the question of subsidies came up, and the advisability of forming a union between the States for the protection of common interests; but neither question was settled, owing to the jealousy between the crown and the States. Several measures, however, were passed that are worthy of notice, since they were the beginning of the struggle in the country between the Slavonic and Teutonic elements. A law was passed prohibiting any one from becoming a citizen who was not able to speak the Bohemian language — by citizen meaning any one who enjoyed all the privileges of the land, especially the right of holding real estate. A foreigner learning the language and obtaining citizenship was still debarred from holding office until in the third generation. Germans were forbidden from becoming teachers and pastors in Bohemian parishes. Any one knowing the language of the country and being ashamed to use it in public, was to be exiled as a disturber of the public peace. German settlements or colonies in the cities, having special privileges, were to be prohibited.

At this Diet of 1615 an event occurred that shows how powerful the States were when they dared assert themselves. Václav Vchynsky, a certain nobleman, received from the king the estates of Chlumeck and Kolin as a reward for helping him to win the crown of Bohemia. One of the laws of the land provided that, should any one help a candidate to win the crown of Bohemia before he had been elected by the States, he was to lose his honor, life, and property. Vchynsky was tried for this offense, and, being found guilty, was condemned to imprisonment for life and the confiscation of his estates. Matthias was obliged to see this sentence carried out without being able to give his friend any assistance.

Matthias, marrying at a late age, was without heirs, and the crown would have fallen to his brothers, Maximilian and Albert; but these also being childless, were willing to resign their rights Ferdinand, the Successor of Matthias. in favor of the nearest kin, Ferdinand of Styria, which proposition was willingly received by the king. But the Protestants, remembering his cruelty in extirpating their brethren from his dominions, were not so eager to crown him King of Bohemia. The chief opponent of Ferdinand was Count Thurn, who insisted that, before this important question be settled, a Diet be called, composed of delegates from all the lands belonging to the Kingdom of Bohemia. Some of the States being won over by fair promises, this proposition was rejected, and after some delay Ferdinand was named the successor of Matthias, having first taken an oath to support and keep all the liberties of the country, and also promising not to interfere in the government during the life of Matthias.

Count Thurn, the opponent of Ferdinand, was immediately chastised by being deprived of the high office of Burggrave of Carlstein, that honor being conferred upon the arch enemy of the Protestants, William Slavata, thus giving the people a hint as to what they might expect from their new ruler.

The question of succession being settled, Matthias gathered together his treasures, took his court, and moved to Vienna, making that city the capital of his dominions.

The government in Bohemia was left in the hands of ten regents, seven of whom were Catholic and three Protestant. This was an ill omen, since among the seven were found the chief enemies of Protestantism; viz., Popel Lobkovic, William Slavata, and Jaroslav Martinec.

Having the example of Styria before them, and the "Most Catholic Prince" crowned as their future sovereign, the Jesuits and fanatical Catholics felt greatly encouraged, and at once began the work of anti-reformation. The Catholic lords and prelates compelled their peasants to attend mass, drove away their Protestant pastors, and inflicted all manner of evils upon them. The persecution reached its climax in the treatment of the people of Broumov and Hrob. These were German cities, on the borders of Bohemia, the former under the jurisdiction of the Abbot of Braunau, and the latter under that of the Archbishop of Prague. The people of these towns being Protestants, had constant troubles with their authorities, who did all they could to oppose them in their religious services. After the passage of the *Letter of Majesty*, they raised funds and

Trouble in Re-
gard to the
Building of
Churches

built their own churches, claiming that they had the right to do so. But the authorities denied this, saying that the privilege was granted only to royal cities, although the people claimed that lands under the jurisdiction of the Church were also royal. The Abbot of Braunau finally drove away the pastor, and ordered the church to be closed; but the people refused to give up the keys, and sent a deputation to the authorities in Prague. The messengers were cast into the White Tower as disturbers of the public peace, and word was sent to the people to submit to their masters, and shut the church. Another deputation was fitted out, but it fared no better than the first; and finally *gens d'armes* were sent to Broumov to compel the people to obey. But although the aldermen of the town were convinced that all their efforts to keep their church would prove futile, and were willing to obey the order, coming as it did from the king himself, they found themselves powerless in presence of the angry people. Men, women, and children rushed to the church, seizing stones and such weapons as they could find, and, posting themselves at the door, were ready to die in defense of their rights. The soldiers, not wishing to shed blood, withdrew, and thus the church remained in the hands of the people until the breaking out of the revolution.

Not so successful, however, were the people of Hrob. In this town they were fined, imprisoned, refused the nuptial ceremony, and, indeed, so harassed that, out of sheer weariness, they consented to attend the Catholic Church. But in order to destroy all remembrance of former happier days, the archbishop, after having driven their pastor out of town, ordered

the church to be pulled down. Thus the people were openly robbed of what they had built at their own expense. The work of destruction lasted three days, and, as Gindely says: "The rumbling of the walls of the church of Hrob resounded throughout all Europe; for no act of this drama in Bohemian history became so well known as this, and no act made such an impression, unless it be the throwing out of the window of the regents. It was regarded, not only as an insult to the Bohemians, but to all Protestants. This seemed a convincing proof that the *Letter of Majesty* of Rudolph had failed to bring the expected results, and that the sword must decide about the existence of Protestantism in Bohemia."

Roused by these acts of violence, the Defenders called upon the Protestant States to meet at Prague to devise some plan whereby redress could be obtained. They assembled in the Carolinum, and drew up an earnest appeal to the king, begging that the people of Hrob and Broumov be permitted to enjoy the liberties guaranteed by the *Letter of Majesty*.

Matthias replied by sending a letter to his regents, saying that the closing of the churches in Broumov and Hrob had been done at his orders, and that the meeting of the States, without his royal permission, was contrary to the customs of the land, and that its originators would be visited with due punishment.

Receiving this letter, the regents sent word to the Assembly at Carolinum to come to the citadel at Hradschin to hear what was the pleasure of their king. The States, hearing the ungracious reply of the king, became filled with indignation, and declared that the contents of the letter had not originated in Vienna, but in

Prague, and immediately pointed to the three regents who had before refused to sign the amnesty when the *Letter of Majesty* had been granted, as the true authors of the message. A copy of the letter having been secured for the consideration of the States, their anger, instead of abating, increased, until they resolved to take fearful vengeance upon the three traitors, as they called the regents.

On the morning of May 23, 1618, the States, among whom the leaders were Henry, Count of Thurn, Linhard of Fels, and Joachimslick, met at the Carolinum, and, arming themselves, pro-^{The Throwing out of the Regents.}ceeded with a large number of attendants to the citadel of Hradschin, where they were received by the four regents then in Prague, Adam of Sternberg, William Slavata, Jaroslav Martinec, and Depold of Lobkovic. The speaker of the States, Paul of Ricany, demanded to know who had put up the king to sending them such an ungracious reply; and when the regents refused to give any satisfactory reply, he began to reproach them bitterly as being the disturbers of the public peace, the cause of all the trouble, and that they aimed at nothing less than to deprive the country of Rudolph's *Letter of Majesty*. At this point the chief burggrave, Adam of Sternberg, warned them not to resort to any acts of violence; upon which Linhard of Fels replied that they had nothing against him, nor against any one else except these two,—pointing to Slavata and Martinec.

Some one then cried out that it were best to throw these two traitors out of the window. Some of the party then took Adam of Sternberg and Depold of Lobkovic, and led them out of the room, while others

seized Martinec, dragged him to the nearest window, and hurled him down into the trench below. Then there was a moment of silence, when Count Thurn, pointing to Slavata, encouraged them to finish the work by saying: "Honorable lords, here is the second one!" The unfortunate regent was immediately seized, and, in spite of his piteous cries and protestations of his innocence, was thrown down after his colleague. His secretary, Fabricius, drawing attention to himself by some derogatory remark, at once shared the fate of his master.

By some strange accident none of the three men were killed, although they fell from a height of some sixty feet. The story that they fell upon a heap of rubbish is now discredited. The secretary, for services rendered afterwards to the government, was knighted, assuming the name of Knight von Hohenfall. The secretary, being the least injured, escaped, and hurried to Vienna to tell the news to the king. The two lords sought refuge at the house of Zdenek of Lobkovic, whose wife, Polyxene, took them under her protection. Count Thurn, indeed, came to demand the fugitives; but the lady persuaded him to leave the wounded men in her care.

On the same day that the regents had been thrown out of the window, the States reassembled and elected thirty Directors, ten out of each State, who were to take charge of the government in the place of the regents. Then they began to collect troops, naming Count Thurn the commander-in-chief. Messengers were then sent to the other Bohemian States, asking them to unite with them for the defense of their liberties, and also to the German princes, ask-

ing for their assistance. The Jesuits were ordered to leave the country, and with them also the Abbot of Braunau and the Archbishop of Prague, and signal punishment was to be visited upon any one refusing obedience to the Directors. Moravia also began to raise troops, but only for self-defense. That country offered to act as mediator between the king and the insurgents; but her good-will led to no results, owing to the obstinacy of both parties.

By the unfortunate act of violence against the persons of the regents, the Protestant States unwittingly placed themselves in the false position that the Jesuit-Spanish party wished to have them. They had stepped from the legal foundation upon which their opposition had thus far been based, and by this impolitic step gave their enemies a reasonable pretext for depriving them, if possible, of the jealously-guarded *Letter of Majesty*. Indeed, the whole course of the following struggle shows the utmost lack of political wisdom, patriotism, and strength of character. In looking over the history of the leaders of this movement, it would seem that all high virtues had been exhausted in the long previous wars, and that now there was utter demoralization of character both among the nobility and the wealthier classes of citizens.

The first mistake made by the States was that of choosing a king whom they knew to be the deadly enemy of their religion. Then they permitted their wrath to get the better of their reason, and committed an act of violence against the regents of their king—an act that could not be overlooked by any ruler without compromising his royal dignity. And again the foolish magnanimity of Count Thurn, in not putting

the regents under strict guard after they had sought refuge at the house of Lobkovic, showed a confidence in his enemies that was almost childish. Slavata repaid this magnanimity by spying out the doings of the Directors, and reporting them in Vienna, thus storing up material out of which the government obtained evidence that afterwards cost some of them their lives.

After the tragedy of May 23d, the indignation of the States began to cool, until finally it gave place to fear; and although the preparations for self-defense were continued, they sent a humble apology to King Matthias begging his pardon, and saying that what they had done had been done to the disturbers of the public good, and that, as far as he was concerned, they wished to remain his loyal subjects. Matthias, being influenced by his favorite, Cardinal Khlesl, the Bishop of Vienna, entered into peaceful negotiations with the Bohemian lords. By this means they gained time for more extensive preparations, and soon their example was followed by other countries of the dominions of Matthias. The Diet of Hungary, which had not yet accepted Ferdinand for their king, now refused to do so, unless he first subscribed to very hard conditions. Upper Austria and Moravia would not allow any troops to be raised in their territory against Bohemia. The people of Silesia and Lusatia, taking advantage of the straits in which the emperor was found, made demands for certain rights and privileges. Count Thurn besieged Budweis.

As soon as the revolution broke out, Ferdinand, the elected King of Bohemia, advised Matthias to embrace the opportunity to take away the *Letter of Majesty* and other liberties and

privileges of the kingdom, and establish an absolute monarchy. He was much disturbed to see the king letting slip the favorable moment by peaceful negotiations, and, seeing that Cardinal Khlesl was the chief cause of this mild policy, he had that prelate kidnapped and carried away to a fortress in Tyrol. The king, naturally indolent, and now further weakened by illness, had not energy enough to resent this indignity to his favorite. Indeed, he was finally convinced that Khlesl was a hypocrite, who cared nothing for the interests of the crown. The obnoxious prelate being out of the way, the Jesuit-Spanish party now surrounded the king, and soon he was convinced that the difficulty in Bohemia could be settled in no other way than by the sword. Accordingly troops began to be collected upon all sides, until there was a large army ready to march against Bohemia. The conduct of the war was given to Ferdinand, who soon sent a force of 10,000 men to Bohemia under the command of Henry Dampierre. Thurn was compelled to raise the siege of Budweis; but he defeated the Imperial army in two small battles, so that it was obliged to retire to Austria. Here it was re-enforced, partly by recruits, and partly by Spanish troops under the command of General Buquoi, a renowned Spanish officer who had distinguished himself in the war against the Netherlands.

The insurrection in Bohemia was welcomed with joy by the neighboring countries that were not friendly to the house of Hapsburg; for they saw in it an opportunity for a general attack upon Spain and Austria, and so hastened to offer their aid to Bohemia. This aid, however, was not given without certain conditions. The leaders in the insurrection were obliged to bind

themselves never again to accept the government of Austria. They then obtained aid from Charles Emmanuel, the Duke of Savoy, and from the princes of the German League. The League sent an army of 14,000 men, under the command of Ernest, the Count of Mansfield. He besieged and took Pilsen, a city notorious in Bohemian history for its loyalty to the enemies of the country. This alliance with the German princes soon brought about a union with Silesia and Lusatia, and for a while all seemed to promise a successful issue to the struggle. General Buquoi was shut up in Budweis, while some of his troops were pursued into Austria.

The winter put an end to active warfare, and negotiations were entered into in regard to peace. Several of the German princes, not belonging to the League, offered their services as mediators, and even went so far as to threaten to join their armies with those of the emperor, unless the Bohemians accepted his terms and ended the war. But before anything could be accomplished, Matthias died, March 20, 1619, and affairs immediately assumed a more serious aspect.

FERDINAND II.

Ferdinand II, as crowned King of Bohemia, announced the death of his predecessor by a letter addressed to the former regents, thus confirming them in their office, and at the same time disclaiming the authority of the Directors. He, however, promised to preserve the liberties of the realm as he had agreed in his coronation oath, also the *Letter of Majesty*, and to make every effort to restore peace and order to the land. But the Protestants, having lost faith in him,

refused to acknowledge him as their king, and as an excuse charged him with breaking that part of his coronation oath that said that he was to take no part in the government during the life of Matthias.

Early in the spring of 1619, General Buquoi left Budweis and attacked many small towns of Bohemia; but Count Thurn, regardless of this, entered into Moravia, where the people were divided into two factions, one favoring the cause of Bohemia, and the other, led by the celebrated Charles of Zerotin, advising complete neutrality. The arrival of Thurn into the country soon had the effect of changing the current of public opinion, and the States not only joined the confederation, but induced those of Lusatia and Silesia to do likewise. A temporary government was also formed, consisting of twenty-four Directors.

With his army re-enforced, Thurn then marched into Lower Austria, and took his stand at the very gates of Vienna. At the same time the Protestants of Vienna had risen in revolt, forced their way into the palace of the king, demanding of him liberty to worship God according to their own ritual. The States of Austria asked of him that he dismiss the troops raised against Bohemia, and give Lower Austria permission to join the confederation, as Upper Austria had already done. For some time Ferdinand was in great peril; but just at the critical moment, General Dampierre appeared before the gates of the city with a small army, which so alarmed the insurgents that they betook themselves to flight, and the king was saved.

In Bohemia, General Buquoi won some brilliant victories over Count Mansfield, which alarmed the Di-

rectors, so that they called Thurn back to defend their kingdom.

In the meantime the all-absorbing question in Bohemia was the election of a new king. There were three candidates,—Charles Emanuel, the Duke of Savoy; John George, the Elector of Saxony; and Frederick, the Elector of Palatinate. The Duke of Savoy was soon dropped from the canvass, the States giving their attention to the last two; those favoring the Lutheran teaching wishing to choose the Elector of Saxony; those the Calvinistic, Frederick. Then, too, Frederick was the head of the Protestant League, formed by the princes of the empire, and by his election it was hoped that considerable aid might be secured from Germany. Another consideration that led the Bohemians to favor Frederick was the fact of his relationship to King James of England, the States imagining that so powerful a sovereign would not leave his son-in-law without assistance, when, by his accepting the proffered prize, a princess of England would become the Queen of Bohemia. Taking all these things into consideration, the Bohemian States elected Frederick, August 26, 1619.

The two disappointed candidates immediately forsook the Bohemian cause; and, indeed, John George went so far as to make friendly overtures to Ferdinand.

In the election of Frederick, the Catholic lords stood aloof, refusing to take any part, but persisting in their loyalty to Ferdinand. All of them were deprived of their offices, and ordered to leave the country. Some went to Passau, some to Vienna, and some entered the army of Ferdinand.

The day following the election of Frederick, there

was also an election in Frankfort, in which Ferdinand was unanimously elected Emperor of Germany, and immediately after crowned.

Although Frederick had exerted all his powers to secure the election, now that the crown was offered him, he hesitated to accept it, being discouraged by many of his counselors. Finally, at the urgent appeal of his wife, who was a very spirited woman and greatly superior to her husband in courage, he accepted the election, and immediately took his departure to his kingdom, where he was received with great honor, and immediately crowned in the cathedral at Hradschin. The coronation oath was such that henceforth the royal power was subordinate to that of the States or Diet.

Shortly after his coronation, Frederick went to Moravia, where all the lords did him homage, except Charles of Zerotin. This nobleman, who possessed both the ability and the influence to be the leader in this great movement for civil and religious liberty, for some unaccountable reason, chose to stand aloof, remain loyal to a cause that was diametrically opposed to his own views, and thus sink into insignificance and oblivion.

The cause of the Bohemians was unexpectedly strengthened by Bethlen Gabor, the Prince of Transylvania. This prince, seeing the difficulties surrounding Ferdinand, determined to grasp ^{Help from the South.} this opportunity to increase his own power. He invaded Hungary, and in a short time subdued the whole country to the borders of Austria and Moravia. General Buquoi was thus compelled to leave Bohemia and go to the defense of Austria.

General Thurn, with an army of 30,000 men, joined

the forces of Bethlen Gabor, and the great army marched directly to Vienna. General Buquoi met the army at the long bridge across the Danube, and a bloody battle was fought that lasted till night, when the Imperialists retreated to the other side of the river, burning the bridge behind them. Before anything further could be done, Ferdinand returned to Vienna, and himself took command of the troops.

About this time a confederation was formed at Pressburg between Bohemia, Hungary, and Transylvania, and messengers were sent to Constantinople to negotiate an alliance with the Sultan of Turkey. The Viennacampaign, that had promised so much, was given up without any advantage to the besiegers. This was due partly to the inclemency of the weather, but mostly to the disorders arising among the troops on account of a lack of provisions and the non-payment of their dues. The reverses that the armies of Bethlen Gabor met in Hungary, while he was besieging Vienna, led him to enter into a truce with Ferdinand, and so both he and Thurn raised the siege and departed from Vienna.

The coming winter gave Ferdinand an opportunity to strengthen himself by seeking help from other Catholic princes. Philip III of Spain, seeing the danger threatening the house of Hapsburg, sent his kinsman both money and troops; the Pope, knowing that the cause was his own, did the same; Maximilian, the Duke of Bavaria, was won over by the promise of the whole of Upper Austria, and John George by the promise of both Upper and Lower Lusatia. The King of Poland, on account of his Catholic faith and his friendship for the house of Hapsburg,

also joined the League, although it was contrary to the wishes of his nobles.

The League of Protestant princes, seeing these preparations, also began to collect troops to prevent Maximilian from invading Bohemia. But at the critical moment, the Spanish army, greatly re-enforced, threatened to invade the territory of the princes of the League from the Netherlands, which so alarmed them that they entered into a truce with Maximilian in such a way that Bohemia was not taken into consideration at all, and thus that prince was free to go on with his preparations for the intended invasion.

By the treacherous act of the princes of the Protestant League, Bohemia was left entirely alone, forsaken by all from whom she had reason to expect sympathy and assistance. This in itself was Frederick's Unhappy Reign. a grievous misfortune; but a still greater one was the fact that Frederick proved to be totally unfit for the position to which he had been chosen. He not only possessed no political insight, but knew not how to adapt himself to circumstances. Upon his arrival in the country he offended many of his best friends by a foolish partiality towards the Moravian Brethren, since their inclination to Calvinism was more in harmony with his own views than the creed of the Evangelicals. Much to the disgust of the people of Prague, he ordered all pictures, relics, and ornaments, to be removed from the cathedral, so that that magnificent church was transformed into a "meeting-house," with walls as bare as those of a barn. The queen also caused not a little scandal by appearing with her court ladies at public receptions in gowns whose make was not regarded decent by the Bohemian ladies. The chief cause for

disaffection, however, was that Frederick, instead of choosing for his counselors the best and ablest men of the nation, brought with him his old favorites—foreigners—who neither understood nor cared for the best interests of the country. Among these may be mentioned Christian, the Prince of Anhalt, and George, the Count of Hohenloh. Placing these in command of the army, he greatly offended the able and tried generals, Mansfield and Thurn.

Nevertheless, the chief cause of the downfall of Bohemia was the character of her own sons. Never in the whole previous history of the nation was there such a scarcity of able and patriotic men. During the Hussite war, when one great leader fell, another immediately arose to fill his place; but in this period of moral decline, there was not a man found in the whole nation that possessed the qualities of a great leader. Thus it was that the management of affairs fell into the hands of strangers; and the natives, instead of helping them with their co-operation and sympathy, looked upon them with jealousy, and even refused to contribute to the support of soldiers that were hired to do their fighting for them. They looked to the peasants and middle class to do this; but these, thinking that the nobles began the war and had far more to lose by its unsuccessful ending than themselves, contributed a mere pittance. The emptiness of the war treasury, time and again, was the source of great embarrassment to the officers; for it often happened that the ragged and half-starved soldiers, on the very eve of some battle, refused to fight unless their rations were first paid them. And yet, at this time, the wealth of the nobility and the citizens of Prague was enor-

mous ; and had they devoted a reasonable part of it to the national cause, it would doubtless have been brought to a successful issue, and they might have lived to enjoy the rest in peace. But in their blind selfishness and perversity, they could not, or would not, see this, and the price they afterward paid for their obstinacy was fearful.

The moral degradation and weakness into which the people had sunk is one of the saddest things to contemplate in the whole eventful history of Bohemia. Not that they were criminally depraved, but that, in their selfish love of ease and luxury, they had sunk into a sort of moral imbecility. As Rome had fallen long before the Northern barbarians invaded and overcame the country, so Bohemia had fallen long before the Catholic barbarians of Europe turned against her, in deadly hatred seeking her ruin.

In the spring of 1620 the Bohemian army, under Hohenloh and Mansfield, invaded Austria, but were repulsed by Buquoi, whose army had been re-^{The War Continued.} enforced by Spanish troops. Shortly after, Bethlen Gabor, having closed the truce with Ferdinand, again renewed his alliance with the Bohemians. Osman, the Sultan of Turkey, sent his congratulations, and promised some assistance to Frederick.

On the other hand, several princes came to aid Ferdinand. Maximilian of Bavaria entered Upper Austria with a large and splendidly-equipped army, commanded by himself and Count Tilly. This so alarmed the people that they submitted to his authority without a struggle. The Elector of Saxony gained possession of Lusatia ; and an army of Cossacks, fitted out by the King of Poland, succeeded in marching through Silesia

and Moravia as far as Lower Austria, which country was thus compelled to swear fealty to Ferdinand, up to this time having refused to do so.

Maximilian and Buquoi joined their forces, and commenced a vigorous campaign against the Bohemians. Their army, amounting to 50,000 men, consisted of Spaniards, Italians, Germans, and other nationalities, and exceeded in strength that of Frederick.

Pressed on by this overwhelming force, the Bohemians were compelled to fall back, the Imperialists gaining possession of the towns of Krumlov, Budweis, Prachatic, and several other places. Pisek, defending itself valiantly, was finally overpowered, and, as a warning to other cities, was razed to the ground, and the people, without regard to age or sex, all massacred. As a result of this, many other towns surrendered without attempting any defense. The Bohemian forces, under the command of Anhalt, kept falling back until King Frederick himself repaired to the army, intending to retrieve some of the disasters; but it was already too late; the army was utterly demoralized, and nothing of importance could be done.

The Imperial army now besieged Pilsen, where Mansfield had shut himself up, and tried in vain to get that general to give them battle. The Bohemian army was at Rokycan, and Thurn, Hohenloh, and Anhalt advised immediate attack upon the Imperialists while they were still weary from the march; but this advice was overruled by the older Anhalt, who feared the superior ability of the emperor's commanders. Thus the favorable moment was allowed to slip by unimproved, and the army then compelled to fall back until it took its stand upon the White Mountain near Prague.

We have now reached the saddest period in Bohemian history. The battle of White Mountain, although insignificant when compared with some of the great battles that the Bohemians had ^{The Battle of White Mountain.} been engaged in during other wars, still in its results proved to be more disastrous than that of Lipan, two centuries earlier. The latter marked the fall of Bohemian democracy; the former the fall of the nation itself.

The Bohemian army, under the command of Hohenloh and Anhalt, numbered about 20,000 men, half of whom were cavalry, the rest infantry. The Imperial army, under Buquoi and Maximilian numbered 25,000 men, their numbers having been considerably reduced by sickness and death, and by the garrisons left in the various towns that had been taken.

When the armies had taken their stand upon the White Mountain, the Bohemian leaders advised an immediate attack upon the army of Maximilian before it was joined by that of Buquoi; but General Hohenloh objected to this, laying great stress upon the strength of their position, and claiming that if the attack should not prove successful, it might involve the loss of the crown. This opinion being accepted by the council of war, the army remained upon the White Mountain, both privates and officers beginning to act in a most heedless manner. Many of the officers went to Prague to visit their wives and relatives; and, indeed, such recklessness was shown by all, that some of the more thoughtful citizens thought that both Frederick and the nation were sold to the enemy by Anhalt and Hohenloh.

November 8th, the army under Buquoi also reached

the field of battle. A council of war was held, wherein Maximilian, flushed with recent victories, was eager for an immediate attack, while Buquoi, more wary, counseled delay. Just at this moment there entered into the room a certain monk, whom the Duke of Bavaria had obtained from Rome for the purpose of encouraging his troops with his prayers and exhortations. This monk, called Dominicus a Jesu Maria, began a fiery harangue, and flourishing a picture of the Virgin, that he claimed had been desecrated by the Protestant soldiers, he called upon all faithful Catholics to avenge the insult done to the Mother of God. His words acted like magic, and, with "Mary" as the watchword, preparations were at once commenced for the battle.

The battle was begun by the Imperialists with great flourish of trumpets, music, and shouting. The enemy attacked the right wing of the Bohemian army, gaining possession of several pieces of artillery. But the younger Anhalt came to the assistance of this division, and soon drove back the enemy in great confusion. But this victory was of short duration, for, assistance coming to the Imperialists, the division of Anhalt was defeated and he taken prisoner. On the left wing the Hungarian allies were more successful, putting to flight the cavalry of Maximilian; but letting their cupidity get the better of their judgment, instead of following up the advantage gained, they began to plunder the camp of the Imperialists, thus giving them time to collect and put in order the disorganized army and turn it against the over-secure victors, who soon lost all they had shortly before gained. The cavalry of Hohenloh was sent to aid the Hungarians, but was defeated and put to flight at the first onset. Both they

and the Hungarians, burdened with the spoils, fled to the Moldau, in whose waters many of them perished. The rest of the army was also defeated and put to flight, all except the division of Moravians, who took their stand by the fortress of Hvezda,* choosing rather to die than follow the example of their panic-stricken comrades.

The whole action hardly lasted an hour, and ended in the total defeat of the Bohemians. Owing to the fearful confusion that followed, it was never ascertained how great was the loss in slain and wounded, but it has been estimated that about 10,000 men of the Bohemian army, and probably 4,000 of the Imperial, were left upon the field of battle.

When the battle began, King Frederick was seated with his lords and ladies at a banquet in his palace in Hradschin. A messenger arrived from the field of action urging him to repair at once to the army to encourage his troops by his presence. But Frederick refused, and remained seated at the table till the dinner was over. When, finally, he started for the army, he met at the city gate his troops rushing towards the city in the wildest confusion. No sooner did this headlong flight meet his eyes than he became as panic-stricken as the rest, and thought of no further defense. He asked Maximilian to grant him a truce of twenty-four hours; but he would give him only eight, with the condition that he immediately abdicate the Bohemian crown.

Frederick left the palace, seeking refuge in the old town of Prague, and at once prepared to leave the

* Hvezda—a star—a fortress near Prague, built in the shape of a six-pointed star.

country. The Bohemian leaders in vain remonstrated with him that all was not yet lost, that General Thurn had still a large army of Hungarians, that General Mansfield was ready to attack the enemy from the rear, that many cities were still in their possession, and Moravia and Silesia were still unconquered. It was all in vain; the cowardly king would not listen to them, and the very next day started for Breslau, accompanied by his generals, Anhalt and Hohenloh, and also by Thurn, who, although the chief instigator of the rebellion, was the first to desert the cause of the Bohemians.

Frederick, having ruled in Bohemia one short winter, became known in history as the "Winter King."

The city, thus ignominiously forsaken by its king and leaders, was compelled to surrender. Five lords were sent to receive the victorious general and ask him what terms he offered; but he gave them to understand that the day of terms was past, that now nothing would be accepted but unconditional surrender. As soon as the army took possession of the city, a manifesto was issued declaring Ferdinand the lawful King of Bohemia, Silesia, and Moravia. Maximilian assured the States that Ferdinand would pardon them, and, leaving Tilly in command of the garrison, he took his departure for Bavaria, carrying with him immense quantities of spoils.

In the defeat of the Bohemians on the White Mountain, the Spanish-Jesuit party finally gained its aim, which was utterly to root Protestantism out of the land, and to establish a despotic form of government in place of the ancient self-rule. Prudence, however,

dictated that great care should be exercised so as not to alarm the country by a premature disclosure of these plans.

Before Maximilian took his departure to Bavaria, Prince Charles of Lichtenstein came to Prague, having been appointed by Ferdinand viceroy of the kingdom. As soon as he assumed control of the government, all those that had been sent into exile by the Directors now returned, the chief among these being the Jesuits, who again took possession of their college.

Meanwhile Buquoi marched into Moravia, where the authorities, encouraged by the presence of Bethlen Gabor, still remained in rebellion. Before the end of the year they, too, were compelled to surrender. At the same time the Elector of Saxony induced the Silesians to make a treaty of peace, promising to secure for them the confirmation of their political and religious liberties. As a result of this, Frederick, who had taken refuge in their capital, was obliged to leave the country.

Of all those that had taken part in the rebellion, General Mansfield alone remained in the field. He had his army in the western part of Bohemia; and while he remained in the land, it was sound policy for the emperor not to interfere in matters of religion; and this the more so since it was only on that condition that the Elector of Saxony was lending him his aid. Neither were there any preparations made to bring to trial the leaders of the rebellion; so that, depending upon the assurance of the Duke of Bavaria, many of those that had fled now returned, while others remained at home, trusting in this false security.

The leaders of the rebellion found to their sorrow that the confidence placed in the magnanimity of the victors had been fearfully misplaced. February 20, 1621, three months after the battle of the White Mountain, an order came from Vienna commanding the arrest of all the leaders of the insurrection. All those that were found in Prague were immediately seized and cast into prison; those living out of Prague were sought out, and also brought to Prague, to be tried before the court organized for this purpose by the viceroy, Charles of Lichtenstein. Shortly after this, a manifesto was given out by the emperor, ordering the exile of all Calvinistic ministers, and also those of the Moravian Brethren; for these sects were not included among those having the protection of the Elector of Saxony. As this blow struck but a small part of the population, the Lutherans or Evangelicals still deluded themselves with the hope that no such severe measures would be taken against them.

While the preparations for trial were made at Prague, the emperor tried by various methods to induce Mansfield to surrender Pilsen. A truce was finally made, during which Mansfield left the country, going to Palatine to the assistance of Frederick. During his absence, his unworthy lieutenant surrendered the city to the enemy, and thus the whole of Bohemia was in the power of Ferdinand.

The court for the trial of the rebels being composed entirely of the enemies of the country, little hopes were entertained that justice would be tempered with mercy; and yet the decisions were far more severe than had been expected. Twenty-seven of the insurgents were condemned to death, and many others to various griev-

ous and disgraceful punishments. The execution of the prisoners was appointed for the 21st of June, 1621. As the 7th of November, the time of the battle of the White Mountain, may be regarded as the day of death of Bohemia as a nation, so the 21st of June was the day of her funeral. To make the scene of the execution so impressive as to strike terror into the hearts of the people, the rink of the Old Town was especially fitted out for the occasion. A platform was erected upon the side of the Town Hall next to the rink, so that the prisoners stepping from the hall upon the place of execution could be seen by vast crowds of people. The platform thus erected was covered with black broadcloth, and surrounded on all sides by troops, so as to prevent any disturbance among the people. The condemned men were led out to execution according to their rank, and any effort made by them to address the people was drowned by the beating of drums and the blowing of trumpets. All went to death bravely, regarding themselves martyrs for the national cause. The first one that was beheaded was Andrew Slik, whose right hand was cut off after his death, as further punishment for having signed the articles of revolt; the second was Václav Budovec, famed for his learning; after him came Christopher Harant of Polzic, who was famous for his books of travel; then the aged Caspar Kaplir of Sulevic; and the rest in their order. Doctor John Jesinsky, a celebrated physician and at that time rector of the university, had his tongue torn out before his execution; and, after being beheaded, his body was quartered beneath the gallows, and stuck up on poles in different parts of the city. John Kutnauer, the mayor of the city, and Simon Susicky, were hanged

upon a beam that was put up in one of the windows of the Town Hall. Nathanael Vodnansky was hanged upon the public gibbet in the rink; and Sixtus of Otten-dorf was pardoned just as he was stepping to the place of execution. The heads of the executed were put in iron cages, and set up upon the tower of the bridge in Old Town as a warning to all passers-by; the bodies were left to the widows and orphans for burial.

On the day following this fearful tragedy, penalties were meted out to those who had not been condemned to death. Some were publicly whipped and then exiled from the country; others cast into prison for life or for a term of years; those that had not made their appearance for the trial, had their names nailed to the gibbet by the headsman, and their estates confiscated.

When such distinguished men were so severely dealt with, the rest of the people that had participated in the uprising had not much to hope for. The court then proceeded to punish the Protestant clergy; that is, the members of the Utraquist Consistory, the Evangelical ministers of the city of Prague, and those of other royal cities. Some time after, the university was taken out of the hands of the Protestants and placed under the control of the Jesuits.

Some time after the great trial, a decree was issued by the emperor, styled a "general pardon," wherein it was announced that, although all those who had taken part in the "abominable rebellion" against him had forfeited their estates, their honor, and their lives, nevertheless, in regard to their honor and their lives, he would show them mercy, if they themselves should acknowledge their guilt in a certain specified time; but if they refused to do so, they would suffer the ex-

treme penalty of the law. At the appointed time many persons made their appearance at court, where they were assured that their lives and honor should not be touched, but only their estates. Still the penalty was far more grievous than they had reason to expect. Some were deprived of all their possessions; some, the half; while others lost a third. The value of the estates thus confiscated, was estimated at 1,440,000,000 Meissen coins. This confiscation of the estates proved a most disastrous blow to the Bohemian nation. By this means, a large part of the old nobility was reduced to penury; their estates fell into the hands of foreigners—Germans, Italians, Spaniards, and others who not only cared nothing for the country or the people, but willingly lent their aid to all manner of cruel persecutions. What the poor peasants endured from these foreign masters, who often were nothing but wild, heartless adventurers, is a story that could be written in blood.

In the year 1622 Ferdinand visited Prague, and promised to call a Diet; but he delayed to do so, although he imposed heavy taxes upon the country, receiving permission to do so, not from the States, according to the ancient laws of the land, but from officers of his own appointing.

Ferdinand, a pupil of the Jesuits, consequently a most zealous Catholic, cherished no higher aim than to convert the Bohemian people back to the ^{Compulsory} "true faith." At first he was restrained ^{Conversions.} somewhat by his agreement with the Elector of Saxony; but having satisfied that ruler by the payment of six millions of thalers, and the cession of both Lusatias, he was free to act according to his own wishes.

In 1624 a decree was passed ordering all priests non-Catholic to leave the country, and the Catholic reformation to be carried into effect in all the cities and villages; this meaning nothing less than that all Churches, no matter of what creed, were to be placed immediately under the supervision of Catholic priests and bishops. As the number of Catholic priests was far from sufficient to fill all the vacancies caused by the exile of the Protestant clergy, they were imported from other countries, especially from Poland. The people then were ordered, by various compulsory methods, to take part in the Catholic service. The work of conversion making slow progress, more severe measures were adopted. The priests were forbidden to marry couples not professing the Catholic faith, nor to perform the burial service to persons that had died not Catholic. The keeping of holy-days, fast-days, and attending mass was made obligatory under heavy fines. As a species of servitude was general in Bohemia at this time, the Catholic lords themselves undertook the conversion of the peasants living upon their estates. This was accomplished by driving them to church in crowds like cattle, by beating them, locking them up, and by various other rough usages.

With all these violent measures, the work of conversion still lagged far behind the zeal of the victors; consequently still more severe methods were resorted to. In Prague, when the greater part of the population refused to be converted, four of the most prominent citizens were sent into exile as a warning to the others. This failing of the desired effect, fifty more suffered the same fate, and then seventy. The fiendish malignity of these would-be missionaries devised a

method of conversion that proved very effective. Small bands of dragoons were sent out and quartered in the houses of the heretics. They tormented them in all the ways that their brutality could devise, until the wretched people either joined the Catholic Church, or ran away from their homes. This method of conversion so filled the land with terror, that often, when the news was brought that the dragoons were coming, the people picked up what they could carry, set fire to their houses, and fled into the forests or into exile. In some villages the peasants, driven to despair, rose in rebellion against their lords, burned their castles, and committed other acts of violence. But they gained nothing by this, for they were always overpowered by the troops sent against them. Those that survived were then subjected to fearful punishments. Some were hanged, some beheaded, some broken on the wheel, and some horribly mutilated.

Thus far the violent measures were mostly directed against the lower classes; but in 1627 the emperor gave out a decree announcing that he would tolerate no one in the kingdom that did not agree with him in matters of faith. Those that refused to become Catholics were given six months time to sell their estates and leave the country. By this ruthless step the climax of suffering was reached; for, as there were no buyers, the people were given the alternative either to give up their religion, or choose exile and beggary in a strange land. Thirty-six thousand families, to whom their religion was dearer than all else, left their native land, seeking refuge in other countries. Among these were many of the old nobility, many professors, and other learned men. In fact,

the best part of the nation, as regards culture and character, was thus driven into exile.

Many of the exiles sought homes in Germany; some went to Holland, and others to Norway and Sweden. As most of them were very poor, they were obliged to resort to various methods of obtaining a livelihood. The noblemen generally became officers in foreign armies; the educated men became teachers,



JOHN AMOS KOMENSKY (Comenius).

scribes, and authors. Among those who became celebrated were Paul Skála of Zhore, and Paul Stránský, both of whom wrote able and trustworthy histories of their times; and John Amos Comenius, renowned throughout the world for his works on pedagogy.

This fearful persecution of the Bohemians, although ostensibly directed against their religion, was, in fact, an attempt to root out their nationality. At this very time, Silesia, whose population was mostly German, was left to enjoy so much religious liberty that many of the Bohemian exiles sought and obtained refuge in that country. This work of denationalization was especially furthered by the aid of the foreign nobility, who, obtaining possession of vast estates by their power and influence, succeeded in corrupting the native Cath-

olic nobles. Still the chief factors in this evil work were the Jesuits. They prowled around like sleuth-hounds, seeking out and destroying every vestige of the nation's former glory. They collected and burned in the public market-place all Bohemian books, without the least regard as to their contents. Indeed, it came to such a pass that whatever was Bohemian was proscribed and doomed to destruction.

In the same year that the Protestants were exiled, the emperor declared the government reorganized. The crown was declared hereditary in the ^{Reconstruction in the} house of Hapsburg, even to the furthest ^{Government.} collateral issue, either male or female. The Diet was deprived of its legislative power, its discussions being limited to those questions proposed by the emperor himself. The power of granting subsidies was left to the Diet, but under such regulations that it was practically according to the will of the ruler. In place of the old open courts, there were established courts whose sessions were held with closed doors, and most of the proceedings were carried on in writing, instead of *viva voce*; and since many Germans were settled in the country, their language, as well as Bohemian, was used in the proceedings. Finally, Ferdinand abolished the General Diets that the countries composing the Kingdom of Bohemia had been wont to hold, thus severing asunder the main bond that had united these provinces.

The humiliation of the country was so great that even the Catholic lords that had helped to establish the government of Ferdinand, now regretted the step, and in vain remonstrated with the emperor, saying that since the instigators of the insurrection had been duly

punished, the others ought to be left in the enjoyment of the liberties that they had never forfeited.

To show his unlimited power, Ferdinand called a Diet, and, without asking its leave, had his son crowned King of Bohemia as Ferdinand III. Ferdinand remained in Prague for eight months, after which he moved to Vienna with his whole court, leaving the government of the country in the hands of the highest officials as his regents.

THE THIRTY YEARS' WAR.

The uprising of the Bohemians against Ferdinand II was the beginning of that long and bloody struggle known in history as the 'Thirty Years' War. Although the emperor had conquered Bohemia, King Frederick was still at large, enlisting in his cause, or perhaps more in the cause of Protestantism, the various German princes, and also the great warrior Christian, the King of Denmark. This brought on a war in which almost the whole of Europe was involved.

At this time, one of the most powerful noblemen in the emperor's dominions was Albert of Wallenstein.

He came from a Protestant Bohemian family; but having received his education from the Jesuits, he became a traitor to both his nation and his Church. As a reward for services done the emperor against the Venetians, Hungarians, and Bohemians, he was endowed with vast estates, and granted the title of the Duke of Friedland.

In 1625, when so many of the German princes had taken up arms against Ferdinand, so that his position was most critical, Wallenstein in a few months raised and equipped an army at his own expense, and came

to the rescue of his sovereign. He defeated the German princes, drove the Danish king out of Germany, and conquered the countries as far as the Baltic, including Mecklenburg, which principality was ceded to him as a reward for these services. These brilliant victories filled him with pride, so that he carried himself very arrogantly before the other princes of the realm, at whose instigation he finally lost his position. He retired to Prague, where he had built himself a beautiful palace, and there lived in princely magnificence.

The emperor, however, soon had cause to regret this ill-advised step. At the removal of their leader, the large armies of Wallenstein soon scattered, and when, soon after, the German princes, under the leadership of the Swedish king, Gustavus Adolphus, rose up against him, he was in no condition to cope with them, his best general, Tilly, sustaining a terrible defeat not far from Leipsic. The Saxons then invaded Bohemia, and obtained possession of Prague.

This proved a time of great rejoicing to the exiled Protestants, who returned to their native land in great numbers. The Utraquist Consistory was re-established, the Jesuits in their turn exiled, and the university restored to Protestant professors. The skulls of the martyrs of 1621, that were still bleaching in their iron cages, were taken down and buried with solemn ceremonies in the old Teyn church.

The Saxon conquest, however, did not prove an unmixed good; for the foreign soldiers were guilty of many acts of cruelty and violence, which were directed especially against the Catholics. The Elector of Saxony, John George himself, came into the country; but his coming was productive of more harm than good.

He collected and carried off to Dresden many rare works of art that had in former times been brought to Prague by King Rudolph. As this had likewise been done by Maximilian of Bavaria at the defeat of the Bohemians on the White Mountain, it follows that the rarest and costliest treasures, that had formerly been the glory of Prague, must be sought for, even at the present time, in the museums and art galleries of Munich and Dresden.

The Saxons having possession of Bohemia, and the Swedes winning victories elsewhere, in this extremity of danger, Ferdinand again turned to Wallenstein, begging him to assume command of the army; which he finally did, but only on condition that he should possess the supreme command, being subject to no one, not even to the emperor.

Taking the field, he soon had an army of 50,000 men; for adventurers from all lands flocked to his standard, knowing that they would be richly rewarded for their services by plundering the nations that they conquered.

As soon as Wallenstein had his army ready for action, he invaded Bohemia, and the Saxons were compelled to leave the country with as great speed as they had before entered it. The Protestants were again driven from the country, never to return, unless they came in disguise as beggars or traveling artisans.

Having conquered Bohemia, Wallenstein turned his victorious army against the Swedes; but although they lost their great leader, Gustavus Adolphus, they nevertheless gained a decisive victory at the battle of Lutzen in Saxony, and Wallenstein was obliged to fall back to Bohemia. In Prague he ordered the execu-

tion of eighteen of his generals, charging them with cowardice in that fatal battle. The following year he made good these losses, winning many battles in Silesia, Lusatia, and Brandenburg.

While winning so many battles for the emperor, Wallenstein did something that by no means pleased his sovereign. Without his consent, indeed without his knowledge, he entered into negotiations with the Swedes and Saxons, and often held confidential discourses with Arnim, the Saxon general, who formerly had served in his army. These actions gave rise to the report that Wallenstein aspired to the crown of Bohemia, which he meant to gain through the help of his army. This coming to the ears of Richelieu, the prime minister of the French king, Louis XIII, who had formed an alliance with the Swedes for the destruction of the house of Hapsburg, he at once offered his services to Wallenstein to aid him in securing the Bohemian crown. These negotiations led to no purpose; but they roused the suspicions of Ferdinand, and ultimately brought the downfall of the great general.

While Wallenstein was carrying on a successful war in Saxony and Brandenburg, the Swedes invaded the dominions of the Duke of Bavaria, and besieged Ratisbon. Maximilian appealed to the emperor for aid, who at once requested Wallenstein to go to the assistance of the duke. The great general was loath to cut short his campaign to go to the aid of the duke, who before had been the chief cause of his removal from the command; consequently he was somewhat dilatory in his movements, and did not reach Ratisbon until it was too late, it having already fallen into the hands of the enemy.

Being late in the season, Wallenstein put his troops into winter quarters in various places in Bohemia, himself setting up his camp in the city of Pilsen. This gave rise to new suspicions against him, which filled him with such indignation that he determined to resign his command, and was only hindered from so doing by the earnest remonstrance of his generals, who would have lost much by his withdrawal from the army. Knowing that there were spies in the camp, he called the chief officers to his headquarters, and, laying the case before them, showing them that his life was in danger, he had them sign an agreement, swearing loyalty to him as long as he remained in the service of the emperor.

The news of these proceedings reaching Vienna, Ferdinand became greatly alarmed, interpreting this special act of allegiance to Wallenstein as treachery to himself. To avert the threatening danger, he gave the chief command of the army to Count Gallas, declaring Wallenstein and the generals that had signed the fatal document traitors, and gave secret orders that the guilty general should be put to death wherever found.

Wallenstein learning in what peril his life was, sought refuge in Eger, where he intended to join the Swedes, with whom he had come to some agreement. But he was not safe there. February 25, 1634, he was treacherously murdered, together with several of his most faithful generals. Some time after this, twenty-four more were beheaded at Pilsen.

The vast estates of Wallenstein were confiscated, and divided among the favorites of Ferdinand. As Wallenstein's guilt was never proved, and as he de-

sired to appear before the emperor to justify his actions, his death and the confiscation of his estates were acts of willful murder and robbery. His own life being full of violence and cruelty, his end may be regarded as a just retribution for his crimes; but this in no way excuses Ferdinand's precipitate and cruel action toward one who had done him so many inestimable services.

After the death of Wallenstein, the emperor placed the chief command of the army into the hands of his son Ferdinand III, who at once marched to Bavaria against the Swedes. In the meantime the Swedes, under General Banner, had joined the Saxons, and the united armies again invaded Bohemia, reaching the city of Prague. But Colloredo, the commander of the forces in that city, receiving re-enforcements, finally succeeded in driving them out of the country.

Ferdinand III, obtaining a decisive victory over the Swedes, and the emperor agreeing to grant some concessions, the Elector of Saxony, as well as several other German princes, made peace, and thus a short respite was granted to Bohemia. This, however, was not for long; for France, the ancient enemy of the house of Hapsburg, commenced a new war.

In 1637, Ferdinand II died, being in his fifty-fifth year. His son, Ferdinand III, assumed the government, inheriting all his father's provinces, as well as the war with the French and the Swedes.

FERDINAND III.

In the year 1638, the Swedes, under Banner, again invaded Bohemia, and, meeting with little resistance, took city after city, devastating the country in a most

frightful manner. As has already been remarked, their rage was turned against everything that was Catholic.

The War
Continued.

Priests, monks, and especially Jesuits, were seized and put to death without mercy; churches were desecrated, and pictures and other decorations destroyed. Whatever was of value and movable was loaded upon vessels, and sent out of the country by the river Elbe. Several thousand villages and towns were plundered and burned, and the grain in the fields utterly destroyed. The unfortunate inhabitants, seeing the bloodthirsty hordes approaching, fled into the forests, where many of them perished from cold and hunger.

After the death of Banner (1641), General Torstenson assumed the command, and again won so many victories over the Imperial forces that they again fell back to Bohemia.

So many defeats having been sustained by the Catholic armies, the government began to consider as to the cause of such disasters. As the generals did not lack in ability, and the troops generally were superior in numbers to the enemy, it was decided that the cause of the misfortune was cowardice among both officers and privates. It was therefore decided to make a notable example of the most guilty regiment. In 1642 a trial was held in Rokycan, in which the Madlonsky regiment was doomed to serve as a warning to the other divisions in the army. Its flags were torn, its officers beheaded, and every tenth man of the private soldiers was shot.

Three years after this, the Swedes, making their headquarters in Silesia, again made frightful inroads into Bohemia and Moravia. They also gained a sig-

nal victory over Generals Hatzfield and Goetz at Jan-kov, of whom the former was killed and the latter taken prisoner. The Swedes then advanced as far as Vienna, but did not venture to cross the Danube, which was guarded upon the other side by artillery and a strong garrison.

In 1646, the war being carried on outside of Bohemia, Ferdinand III embraced the opportunity to come to Prague to have his fourteen-year-old son, also Ferdinand, crowned King of Bohemia.

In 1648 the terrible Thirty Years' War was drawing to its close; but before it ended, the Swedes again visited the country with fearful devastations. Coming to Prague, through the treachery of some of the inhabitants, they entered the city on the Small Side, and immediately began the work of destruction. The houses were broken into and pillaged, and the people murdered without mercy. Some of the fugitives, escaping to the Old Town, gave the alarm, and the city at once made preparations for a stout defense. The whole city was up in arms, and resisted the attacks of the besiegers with so much valor that they were kept at bay, when the joyful tidings were brought to the city that peace had been made at Westphalia. But before the news came, the Swedes had plundered the palace at Hradschin, sending off many loads of treasures down the Moldau and the Elbe.

At the close of the war, Ferdinand visited Prague, thanked the citizens for so ably defending the city, and rewarded them with a gift of 300,000 guilders. Then, as an act of devotional thanksgiving, he ordered a pillar with the Virgin and Child, still standing, to be put up in the large rink of the Old Town.

THE CONDITION OF THE COUNTRY AFTER THE THIRTY YEARS' WAR.

There is scarcely a parallel where a nation was plunged into such depths of misery as Bohemia during the Thirty Years' War. War is a frightful evil in modern times, when some regard is paid to the rights of individuals, and soldiers are regularly recruited troops belonging to the respective nations; but in those days the individual did not seem to have any rights, and the soldiers, being hordes of bloodthirsty mercenaries, were equally a terror to the people across whose territory they marched, whether they belonged to the enemy or to their own sovereign. With such barbaric hordes crossing and recrossing the country in all directions, Bohemia was left in a condition most pitiable.

Thousands of villages* were plundered and destroyed, so that they disappeared from the face of the earth, and never again were rebuilt. The larger towns, either in part or entirely, were reduced to cinders, and long years passed before they were even partially rebuilt. Vast tracts of land lay waste for lack of hands to cultivate them. The wretched peasants, deprived of their tools, cattle, and all other means of cultivating the soil, eked out a miserable existence by aiding each other as best they could, hitching themselves to the plow, and other unnatural methods of labor. The cities, deprived of their population, not only by the war, but also by the exile of the Protestants, languished for

*The peasantry in those days, as at the present time, lived in villages, so that the number of villages to a certain population was much greater than in countries where the tillers of the soil live on isolated farms.

long years in poverty, which the close of the war did not relieve, as the Peace of Westphalia made no provision for the return of the exiles. Indeed, the country suffered such a fearful loss in population that, out of the 3,000,000 before the war, barely 800,000 remained. And, as if the cup of bitterness were not overflowing to the wretched people, they were left entirely to the tender mercies of the new nobility that settled upon the confiscated estates of the exiled Protestants. These new lords themselves were cruel enough, but that was as nothing when compared with the brutal tyranny of the swarms of officials that surrounded them. It was not surprising that at times the downtrodden people thought that "God had forsaken the earth, and given Satan permission to torment its inhabitants according to his own pleasure."

As for religion, it seemed that all had become devout Catholics; but, in truth, this was not the case. Bibles were still held by some families, who kept them hidden in secret places, in the walls or under the floors. Protestant ministers traveled through the country in disguise, held services in the depths of dark forests, mountains, and caves, and administered the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper.

This method of worship was accompanied with great danger, as the country was filled with mendicant monks, whose chief aim was to ferret out and bring to punishment the least act of unfaithfulness to the Catholic Church. These monks also sought out all Bohemian books, and burned them in the public marketplace. Thus a certain monk named Konias boasted that he had burned 60,000 Bohemian books. In place of the reading thus ruthlessly destroyed, they distrib-

uted among the people their own pietistic productions, whose aim was not to instruct the mind and open the understanding, but to fill the soul with superstitious fears, and teach the people to practice innumerable petty ceremonies. Instead of teaching sound morals, they told the people empty and often immoral legends about the lives of the saints.

It was at this time that John of Nepomuk was canonized, and some of the legends related about this bogus saint are truly scandalous. The land was filled with shrines, at which false miracles were performed by the crafty and depraved monks, and the people deluded to make pilgrimages and offerings. It is worthy of remark that the truly great and good men in the nation's history, that deserved to be enshrined in the hearts of the people as saints, were entirely overshadowed by new saints, that had nothing to recommend them but some stupid miracle invented by an equally stupid monk. Their pietistic teachings extended into all the relations of life, and it was due to these same monks that the simple greeting common among European nations was exchanged for the long one of "Praised be Jesus Christ."

How well the monks succeeded in inculcating their superstitious teachings is proved by the numerous laws passed at this time against witchcraft. Indeed, the fearful demoralization that followed in the intellectual condition of the people may be laid at the door of these same monks. After the war, the university also came under the control of the Jesuits; and as an illustration of how they hindered all free thought, even among the faculty, may be given the following: Every professor, before being permitted to give lectures, was

obliged to take an oath that he believed in the immaculate conception of the Virgin.

As to the general tenor of their education, it was mostly scholastic—empty discussions about empty and useless subjects. While Comenius was publishing books and establishing schools in foreign countries, wherein were to be trained men and women having their observation cultivated, their intellect quickened, and the whole world of real objects opened to them, his countrymen were doomed for several more generations to chew the dry leaves of monkish scholasticism.

With all these evils to cope with, it was not surprising that the nation's spirit was broken, that they lost their patriotic sentiments, and to a great extent became Germanized. Indeed, so many forces were brought to bear upon them, that if it were not for their proverbial tenacity, they would have become completely denationalized, adopting, like Scotland and Ireland, the language of their conquerors. The language was mostly preserved among the lower classes of people; for the upper classes, and especially the nobility, gloried in their foreign customs and speech. It was at this time that the old simple title "sir," used among the nobility, was gradually dropped, the nobles adopting such titles as count, duke, baron, prince—titles before unknown in Bohemia.

As for native literature, that became entirely neglected, and what few authors there were, wrote mostly in the Latin tongue. Among these, the most noteworthy was the Jesuit Balbinus, who produced some valuable historical works; the second to him in rank was the Moravian Pesina, also a historian; and in connection with him may be mentioned Hamersmid Ka-

ramuel of Lobkovic, who lived during the reign of Ferdinand III, and was renowned for his learning.

The great evil brought upon the country by being conquered by the Hapsburgs was the total destruction of all home rule. The government was entirely reorganized, but all in such a way as to render it entirely subservient to the officials in Vienna. Gradually, according to the good-will of the monarch, some of the lost rights were restored; but, in general, it may be said that the country is groaning to-day under the oppression of an unfriendly and almost absolute monarchy.

CHAPTER IX.

FROM LEOPOLD TO MODERN TIMES.

IN the year 1654 the oldest son of the emperor, who had been crowned King of Bohemia as Ferdinand, died; and the second son, Leopold, was declared the heir. The following year Ferdinand III died, and Leopold ascended the throne as Emperor of Austria and King of Bohemia.

Although this ruler enjoyed a long and prosperous reign, his government had little bearing upon affairs in Bohemia, all remaining about the same as in the reign of his father.

One of the most noteworthy events was the uprising of the peasants, who were driven to this desperate step by the frightful tyranny of their masters. This rebellion ended as all such rebellions did—they were overcome by superior forces, the leaders tortured and hanged, and the unfortunate peasants compelled to return to their homes and again endure the cruelty of their oppressors. There was, however, a little variation in this rebellion; many peasants fled to the mountains, preferring starvation to the previous life-in-death that they had endured; and as the lords could not perform the needed labors, they resorted to peaceable measures to induce some of them to return. Some concessions were also granted by the government; but these were little heeded, and the condition of the people was soon as hard as before.

During the peasant war the fields, as a matter of course, were neglected, which brought on a famine the following year (1681). The number of people dying was about 100,000, Prague alone losing a third of this number.

The year 1682 is notable as the time when the Turks were expelled from Hungary, where for so many years they had held much territory. The successful issue of this war was mostly due to the heroic efforts of John Sobieski, the King of Poland.

During the reign of Leopold commenced the war of the Spanish Succession; but this did not affect Bohemia any further than that she was obliged to furnish her quota of troops and pay heavier taxes.

Leopold died in 1705, after a reign of forty-eight years, and his oldest son Joseph became emperor, as Joseph I.

JOSEPH I.

Joseph was a man endowed with uncommon gifts of mind; and no sooner had he assumed the government than he began to prepare to introduce into the country many needed reforms. He appointed various committees to investigate the condition of the different departments of the government, and to make such suggestions as they deemed necessary for their improvement.

The war of the Spanish Succession going on, and Joseph, wishing to be better able to aid his brother Charles, sought by various methods to win the favor of the German princes. Among the concessions granted them was one bearing directly upon Bohemia. This kingdom, like the German States, was to furnish its part of taxation for the support of the Imperial government,

in consideration of which it was entitled to claim its protection in time of war. This privilege was granted to the Imperial government, with the express understanding that the integrity of the Bohemian crown, together with its ancient privileges, was to remain intact.

Before Joseph could carry into effect any of his reforms he died (1711), and his brother Charles became the ruler. As King of Bohemia, he is known in history as Charles II, but as Emperor of Germany as Charles VI.

The unexpected death of Joseph I gave a new turn to the Spanish war; for the European princes, seeing that, by the death of Joseph, Charles would become ruler both of Spain and Austria, objected to the formation of so strong a power as dangerous to the peace of Europe. They therefore deserted his cause, compelling him thus to make peace by acknowledging Philip of Anjou as King of Spain, and himself to be contented with the island of Sardinia, the Netherlands, and some minor provinces. The peace was concluded by the Treaty of Utrecht, 1713.

In 1723, Charles came to Prague, and was crowned with great splendor as King of Bohemia. As ruler of that country he paid little attention to the internal affairs of the kingdom, being chiefly concerned with outside politics, meeting, however, little success in that direction. His able general, Eugene of Savoy, did win some lands from the Turks, but at his death they again reverted to their original owners. Charles also lost Naples and Sicily, which he had but recently taken from the Spaniards.

Charles was the last male descendant of the house of Hapsburg, and being anxious to retain the crown

in his family, he had a law passed whereby the women of that house were declared the rightful heirs. This law is known in history as the Pragmatic Sanction, and it was solemnly agreed to by all the princes composing the empire, as well as by other European powers. By this law, Charles's eldest daughter, Maria Theresa, became his immediate heir. In 1736 she was married to Francis Stephen, the Duke of Tuscany, of the house of Lorraine. In 1740, Charles died, and Maria Theresa became Empress of Austria.

MARIA THERESA.

Although the right of inheritance to the Austrian dominions had been confirmed to Maria Theresa by so many solemn promises and agreements, no sooner was her father dead than numerous princes rose up as claimants, either to parts or to the whole of her provinces. Among these were the Electors of Bavaria and Saxony, and the Kings of Spain, Sardinia, and Prussia. All based their claims upon the rights of relationship, or upon the false interpretation of documents long forgotten.

The most dangerous of these claimants was Frederick of Prussia, who began to make immediate preparations to seize a part of Silesia. As Maria Theresa was not prepared for war, Frederick soon gained possession of the whole of that province, and then turned his victorious arms against Bohemia, the Saxons and Bavarians invading it from another direction. Prague was soon in the hands of the enemy.

Charles, the Elector of Bavaria, had himself proclaimed King of Bohemia. Calling together the lords and knights to the number of 400, whose estates were

mostly in his power, he compelled them to take the oath of allegiance, which was done with great solemnity in the cathedral at Hradschin. The chief officers of the State, not wishing to violate their oath of allegiance to the queen, had left the city. Charles appointed other officers to take their places; then called a Diet, which granted him a heavy subsidy. He then took his departure for Frankfort, where he was chosen by the electors Emperor of Germany (1742).

Meanwhile the Hungarians had espoused the cause of Maria Theresa, calling her their "king," and raised a large army to go to her assistance. The English and the Russians also lending their aid, her condition began to assume a more hopeful aspect. In order to be rid of her most formidable rival, she ceded the whole of Silesia to Frederick, and also the county of Kladrau, which had always been an integral part of Bohemia. The Elector of Saxony also joining in this peace, the queen was now free to turn her whole strength against the French and the Bavarians.

The allies under the command of Marshal Belleisle, to the number of 30,000, invaded Bohemia and shut themselves up in Prague, where they were besieged by Charles of Lorraine, the queen's brother-in-law.

The French defended themselves bravely for eleven weeks, at the close of which they were reduced to such want that they ate horseflesh. While in this extremity, a large army of their countrymen were coming to their assistance; but they were prevented from crossing the boundaries by Charles, who raised the siege to go to meet the new enemy. The opportunity was embraced by the French army to leave the city, which was done in December during a season of very cold

weather, and the troops being destitute of both proper clothing and provisions, many of them perished before they reached Eger, the first halting place.

Bohemia was thus delivered from the enemy, and the government of Charles of Bavaria came to an end. In the spring of 1743, Maria Theresa came to Prague, and was solemnly crowned Queen of Bohemia. The ceremony was performed by the Bishop of Olmutz, the Archbishop of Prague being in disfavor on account of his adherence to Charles of Bavaria. Many of the lords who had sworn allegiance to the usurper had also much to fear. But Maria Theresa, unlike her ancestor Ferdinand, finally granted pardon to all, so that not a single execution marred the beginning of her prosperous reign. She remained in Prague six weeks, and then returned to Vienna, carrying with her the Bohemian crown, which remained there until the time of Leopold II.

In the meantime the queen's army carried on so successful a war against the Emperor Charles VII as to deprive him of the whole of Bavaria. Put to these straits, he appealed for aid to Frederick of Prussia, who broke the peace he had made with Maria Theresa, and again invaded Bohemia. Again he obtained possession of Prague; but he did not hold it long, being soon driven away by Charles of Lorraine.

Some time after the above events Charles VII died, and his son Maximilian, desirous of regaining his hereditary provinces, made peace with the empress, renouncing all claims to her territories.

The vacancy caused by the death of Charles VII was filled by the election of Francis, the husband of Maria Theresa, as Emperor of Germany. Frederick

of Prussia also acknowledged his authority, and a peace was made at Dresden in 1745.

From the year 1745 to 1756 the land had peace, so that it was enabled, to some extent, to recuperate the strength wasted in so many wars; but in 1756 another war broke out, which is known in history as the Seven Years' War.

THE SEVEN YEARS' WAR.

Maria Theresa never became fully reconciled to the loss of beautiful Silesia, and was only waiting for a favorable opportunity to try to regain it. Such a moment seemed to have arrived in the year 1756, when, having gained France as an ally, she declared war against Frederick.

At the very beginning of the war, Frederick invaded Bohemia, and, after gaining a brilliant victory at Lovosic, he marched to Prague, where Charles of Lorraine was waiting to receive him. A battle was fought, where Frederick gained another victory, compelling Charles to shut himself up in Prague, where he was besieged by the Prussians for six weeks. The enemy, trying to force him to surrender, kept up a constant bombardment upon the city, sadly damaging some of the finest buildings, among these the cathedral on the Hradschin. Finally, the Field Marshal Daun coming to the assistance of the distressed city, Frederick raised the siege, and went to meet the coming army. A decisive action took place at Kolin. Frederick was defeated, and compelled to leave the country in the wildest disorder, having lost 20,000 men.

From that time on, the war was carried on outside of Bohemia, mostly in the dominions of Frederick.

The two generals, Daun and Laudon, inflicted many crushing blows upon the Prussian army, which certainly would have discouraged any ruler not possessed of so indomitable a spirit as Frederick. As soon as

his army sustained a defeat in one place, he hastened to make it up by a victory elsewhere, so that, notwithstanding the glorious successes of the Imperial army, the advantage did not seem to lean either to the one side or the other.

Finally, both the sovereigns becoming weary of the war, to prevent further devastation of territory and bloodshed, a peace was



JOSEPH II.

made in 1763, leaving affairs as they were before the war.

In 1764, Joseph, the oldest son of Maria Theresa, was elected King of the Romans, and his father dying the following year, he became Emperor of Germany, being made also joint-ruler with the queen of the Austrian dominions.

Like his ancestor of the same name, Joseph was a man possessed of uncommon gifts of mind and heart; and having, through study and travel, gained much knowledge and experience, he early began to form plans for working a great reform in his dominions. As his plans were very radical and far-reaching in their consequences, he dared not make them fully known while his mother still lived, but contented himself with carrying out the more zealously the reforms that she herself had proposed.

The rulers that governed the country the years following the 'Thirty Years' War concerned themselves far more with external politics than with the internal affairs of their own State. This was partly due to the old State system, which proved inadequate to the new

Changes during the Reign of Maria Theresa and Joseph II.

conditions, and partly to their own indifference. It will be remembered that Joseph I had appointed several committees to study what changes were needed in the various departments, but died before anything could be accomplished, and his brother Charles failed to appreciate the importance of the needed reforms. His daughter, Maria Theresa, however, was gifted with a far more progressive mind, and early reached the conclusion that, if her subjects were to be prosperous and happy, far more attention must be paid to the internal affairs of the State. Even in the midst of wars she renewed the old committees, and infused new life into them; and very soon the good results of their work began to manifest themselves. The administration of law was greatly improved, and many ancient abuses were removed.

One of the changes, which proved a great blessing

to the country, was the establishment of courts having jurisdiction in cases of capital punishment. In Bohemia alone there were three hundred and seventy-eight towns where criminal courts were held. These were now reduced to twenty-four, and placed in the hands of competent judges, men well versed in the laws. From that time on, no one had to fear that he would lose his life through the maliciousness of some lord or official.

Another important reform introduced was a change in the school system. Up to this time the schools had been in the hands of Jesuits, whose educational methods tended rather to benumb than enlighten the understanding. Maria Theresa deprived the Jesuits of their control of public education, placing it in the hands of a commission of learned men, who had authority over all the schools in her dominions. Many new professorships were established in the university, and rapid progress was made in the arts and sciences.

The government of Maria Theresa, although beneficent in its designs, was not without its evils, like all absolute monarchies. Bohemia was deprived of the last vestige of self-government. In the old days the country was divided into circuits, the officers in these being appointed by the States; but under her government they were appointed by the crown, and responsible for their actions only to the chief officers in Vienna. Indeed, the whole government became a vast system of bureaucracy, having its center in Vienna. This was the case in Bohemia and in some of the other Austrian provinces, but not in Hungary. The empress favored that country, partly from gratitude and

partly from fear. The latter motive has, doubtless, governed the actions of Austrian monarchs ever since; for Hungary has always enjoyed more liberty and home-rule than any other Austrian province.

Whatever was done thus far, was done under the auspices of Maria Theresa alone; but when, in 1764, Joseph was made joint-ruler, the work of reform began to be pushed forward with far more speed and energy.

One of the chief aims that Joseph II set before himself was to improve the material condition of his subjects, by removing the evils under which they suffered and lightening their tasks and burdens. He showed his benevolent spirit in the years 1770 and 1771, called the "Hungry Years," when there was great want in the land on account of a poor harvest. There was such a scarcity of food that many of the people ate grass and the leaves of trees, in consequence of which various diseases appeared among them, causing a great mortality. When the news of this reached Vienna, Joseph himself hastened to Bohemia, opened the military magazines, sent to Hungary for rye and rice, and had the provisions freely distributed among the suffering people.

Joseph II was a zealous adherent of the French Encyclopedists; therefore he hailed with joy the news that the Order of Jesuits had been abolished by the Pope. They were now deprived of <sup>Further Re-
form in Ed-
ucation.</sup> their colleges and schools; their property was taken away and formed into a fund devoted to the needs of secular education; their books, collected from numerous monasteries, were placed in the library of the university. The theological and philosophical professorships were placed into the hands of professors of other

orders, and also among those not belonging to any religious order.

A new school system was also organized for the gymnasiums and the primary and intermediate schools, which up to this time had been entirely in the hands of the parish priests.

The new school system, although excellent in regard to better methods of instruction, did not prove such a blessing to the Bohemian people, which was due to the fact that German was made compulsory in all the schools.

Joseph II cherished the plan of consolidating the various peoples inhabiting his dominions into one great nation having one common language, that language being the German. This grand plan was to be carried into effect through the medium of schools and public offices. As the country people still clung to their mother tongue, this was a source of great hardship to them; for while a German youth entering the gymnasium had everything taught him in his own language, the Bohemian one was compelled first to master a language foreign to him, and which he often regarded with hatred. The introduction of German into public offices was a source of still greater trouble. All the official papers and legal documents were ordered to be written in German, which the peasants could not understand, and which the haughty officials, creatures of the government, would not deign to explain. As the official was responsible only to Vienna, there was no method of redress, and thus the people were forced to endure innumerable hardships and persecutions.

But as every species of oppression carried to excess

reacts upon itself, bringing its own punishment, so this cruel persecution of the Bohemian people proved the very means of rousing the national spirit, and awakening an interest in the cultivation of a language neglected for so many generations.

Men of letters, in whom the national consciousness had not died out, now began to work to awaken the same feelings in others, and in due time the fruits of their labors began to appear. Thus it was that the period of the greatest humiliation of the Bohemian language, proved to be the dawn of a new era, in which the nation may yet regain much of its former liberty and importance.

The government introduced many reforms, and was sincere in its attempts to alleviate the condition of the people, but the relationship of the peasants to their lords was such as to permit the most grievous oppression. Driven to desperation, the peasants arose in rebellion, seeking redress at the court in Vienna. The matter was laid before Diets called for this purpose both in Bohemia and Moravia. The States refused to pass any law reducing the number of days' tasks required from the peasants, but gave the queen to understand that they would acquiesce in any change that was made by the central government. Thereupon, a patent was issued that did away with many abuses and reduced the tasks to about one half.

The Socage
Patent and
Peasant Up-
rising.

When this patent was read to the people, they refused to believe that it was the true one, a report having been spread that the lords had denied the genuine document, and shown the people a counterfeit one.

The peasants again rose in rebellion. Several thou-

sand of them marched to Prague with the determination to get possession of the true patent. On their way they committed many acts of violence, such as breaking into the castles of the lords and inflicting all manner of indignities upon the officials, who, on account of their cruelties to the peasants, were always the objects of their special hatred.

Before they reached the city, they were met by an armed force and soon scattered, some of them being taken prisoners. To strike terror into the hearts of the wretched people and prevent any further outbreaks, four of the leaders were condemned to death, and hanged, one on each of the principal highways leading to Prague. There were skirmishes in several other places between the peasants and the troops; but these did not lead to any serious results. After that, General Oliver Wallis traveled through the country, announcing with great ceremony the contents of the true patent; and the people, learning that such was the will of the government, became quiet, thankful to have their burdens lightened, even though it were but partially.

Another reform introduced by Maria Theresa was the abolition of all torture in cases on trial, and also
Torture
abolished.
all cruel and unnatural methods of execution; such as breaking on the wheel, flaying, and the like. Trials of witches, as well as all laws against witchcraft, were also done away with.

In 1780, after a successful reign of forty years, Maria Theresa died, being sincerely mourned by all her subjects.

JOSEPH II.

Perhaps there never was another ruler who, in so short a time, introduced so many changes in both the

public and private life of his subjects as the Emperor Joseph II. While he was joint-ruler with his mother, his infatuation for reforms and innovations was kept within the bounds of reason; but as soon as she was gone, he laid aside all reserve, and plunged with headlong impetuosity into the work of transforming his countries into such a state as he deemed would best insure the prosperity of his subjects. In his blind zeal for reform he did not take into consideration the long-established customs of the people, their habits of life, and mode of thought; indeed, he ignored all the ancient rights and privileges, not deeming it beneath his dignity to meddle in the most petty affairs of private life.

The year after the death of his mother, Joseph II issued the Toleration Patent, which may be regarded as one of the most benevolent and progressive acts of his reign. By this patent, people non-Catholic obtained the privilege of openly professing their faith, and of building churches and school-houses. Notwithstanding all the labors of the Jesuits and other Catholics, there were still many people in the land who in secret held to the Protestant faith. Even as late as 1731, some of these families, being discovered and fearing persecution, left the country, forming settlements near Berlin and in Silesia, which did not then belong to the Austrian dominions. When the Toleration Patent was announced, some 100,000 persons appeared before the proper authorities to have themselves matriculated as Protestants. These people were generally called Hussites, but they were the remnants of the Bohemian Brethren. The government, knowing nothing about this sect, required them to adopt either the Augsburg or the Calvinistic Confession of Faith,

The Tolera-
tion Pat-
ent.

which most of them willingly did. Still there were quite a number among those claiming the privilege of the Patent that refused to join either sect, calling themselves Adamites. The history of those times charges them with gross errors in faith and many wicked practices. Even if these charges be true, the methods that they were dealt with sadly belie the vaunted liberalism of Joseph II. The adults were transported to Hungary and Transylvania, and their children placed in Catholic families to be brought up. A law was also passed that any one publicly professing to be a Deist—thus the authorities called this sect—should receive twelve blows with a club.

The number of Protestants rapidly increased, so that, even during the reign of Joseph II, there were forty-eight churches, having a membership of 45,000 souls; thirty-six of these were of the Calvinistic, and twelve of the Augsburg Confession. Each of these sects was granted a superintendent, who was directly responsible to the crown.

As the Protestant Churches were thus placed directly under the control of the government, so Joseph determined that the Church in general should be subordinate to the State. To this end, he ordered that no Papal bull should be announced in any of his dominions, unless it had first been submitted for approval to the civil authorities. Henceforth monasteries were not to be subject to any power non-resident in the dominions of Austria. Later, Joseph ordered the abolition of all convents that he deemed unnecessary, leaving only those that devoted themselves to the education of youth or to the care of the sick. From 1782 to 1788, fifty-eight of these institutions were either

destroyed or devoted to other purposes. The property was confiscated to the State, and was set aside as a fund for the support of Churches. This made it possible for many new churches to be built in towns and villages that had been without any means of religious instruction, the inhabitants being obliged to go to service a great distance from their homes.

The Pope, then Pius VI, looked on in consternation at all these unheard-of innovations; and when remonstrances proved unavailing, his Holiness did an act unprecedented in history—he himself undertook a journey to Vienna to try to dissuade the emperor from making any further encroachments into the ecclesiastical domains. But although he was received and entertained with great honor, he failed of accomplishing his purpose.

The emperor went on in his Church reform by taking away a part of the diocese of the Archbishop of Prague and attaching it to the bishoprics, thus equalizing somewhat the income and the jurisdiction of these prelates. Their power, on the other hand, was much limited by removing marriage from their jurisdiction, placing it under the control of the civil authorities.

While these innovations were introduced, the Pope was silent; but when Joseph went so far as to prohibit pilgrimages to the various shrines in the country, and to dictate as to what sort of ceremonial should be observed in Church service, his Holiness again raised his voice in protest, this time threatening to use the extreme penalties of the Church against the daring monarch if he heeded not the warning of the Church. Joseph, not wishing to bring down upon himself the wrath of all the priesthood, left well-enough alone,

and the Pope also was content with this partial obedience.

Another good work that this progressive ruler did, was to take the censorship of the press from the control of the clergy, and place it in the hands of enlightened laymen. He also did much to encourage science. In 1769 a society had been organized in Bohemia for the cultivation of science. Joseph elevated this private organization into a State society, entitled "The Scientific Society of the Kingdom of Bohemia." This gave a great impetus to the cultivation of science, especially to the mathematical and physical sciences, and also to historical researches.

One of the greatest blessings granted his subjects by Joseph II, was the abolition of personal servitude. According to the new law, the peasants were free to move from their homesteads, to send their sons to learn any trade they wished, without asking the consent of their lords; their estates became allodial, socage was considerably reduced, and the sum fixed by which a peasant could obtain exemption from such duty.

As far as courts of justice were concerned, the peasants still remained under the jurisdiction of their lords; but these were required to have judges well versed in the laws, and to conduct the trials according to the general laws of the land.

Nowhere did Joseph show greater activity than in the improvement of the judicial departments. One of his chief aims was to secure entire uniformity in the administration of law, this seeming to him the most effective method for carrying out his plans of centralization. One sweeping change after another was made in utter disregard of the customs, rights, and priv-

ileges of towns and cities. The new laws introduced were based partly upon the old Roman law, and partly upon the unwritten common law. The change in the laws themselves would have proved a great blessing had not their administration been placed entirely in the hands of State officers, thus depriving the people of all self-government.

The States, composed of the three orders of lords, knights, and citizens, that in the old days had been such a power when assembled in the Diets, now had their power entirely broken, their duties being transferred to one of the departments of the general government.

Unlike his mother, Joseph did not grant any favors to the Hungarians; and to avoid the promise, usually given in the coronation oath, that he would preserve the liberties of the country, he refused to be crowned either as King of Bohemia or of Hungary.

Mention has already been made of the great injustice done the Bohemians in regard to their language, even during the reign of Maria Theresa. After her death it was worse. Joseph II, anxious to see the work of centralization going on more rapidly, pushed forward the use of the German tongue with more and more unscrupulousness, thus inflicting many hardships upon the poor peasants, who could not master a strange language in so short a time.

Another irremediable wrong done the Bohemian people, was the destruction of many of their ancient works of art. Joseph was a utilitarian to the last degree, and, had it been in his power, he would have destroyed everything that did not in some way contribute to the material prosperity of the nation. Ancient

monasteries, beautiful churches filled with paintings and sculpture, were abandoned and suffered to go to decay ; and the treasures of art were often sold for the price of old trappings. Indeed, an attempt was made to transform the beautiful palace upon the Hradschin to soldiers' barracks.

As an offset, however, to this destructive tendency against the nation's most cherished memorials, may be mentioned his benevolent institutions. In 1783, Joseph established the first orphan asylum; in 1784, a poor-house; in 1786, an asylum for the deaf and dumb; in 1789, a hospital for unfortunate girls, together with a foundling asylum,—these all being in the city of Prague.

The government of Joseph, although an absolute despotism, was so tempered with benevolence that the people, doubtless, would have submitted to it in patience, had not the infatuated ruler gone a little too far in his paternal meddlingness. When Joseph forbade all costly funerals, and ordered that the money of orphans should not be put out at a higher rate of interest than three and one-half per cent, the people began to murmur ; but these murmurs gave place to loud expressions of indignation when he tried to enforce the law whereby illegitimate children shared equally in the property of their parents with those born in lawful wedlock ; and surely it was a ridiculous stretch of royal authority to prohibit the sending of cakes among friends on Christmas-tide.

These petty interferences in the private life of his subjects were the immediate cause of much discontent; and when once the fault-finding spirit was aroused, it

Dissatisfac-
tion with Jo-
seph's Gov-
ernment.

seemed that no one was satisfied with anything the emperor had done.

This growing dissatisfaction was increased by Joseph's unfortunate foreign politics. In Germany all his attempts at reform were brought to naught by the opposition of the various princes.

The expression of discontent among individuals was soon followed by that of nations. At first an insurrection broke out in Transylvania, that had to be put down by force of arms. Then the Hungarian nobles arose against their ruler, demanding the convocation of a State Diet. An insurrection broke out in the Netherlands, which, being sustained by Prussia, succeeded in driving the emperor's troops out of the country. Other disturbances arose also in Bohemia and Tyrol. All this time Joseph put on a bold front, thinking that in due time all would be brought to order; but when the Prussians threatened to join their forces with those of the Turks against him, he perceived the greatness of the danger surrounding him, and immediately began to grant concessions to the people in his provinces. The Hungarians being the most unruly, he began the work of conciliation in that country. Appointing a State Diet to meet in 1789, he promised to have himself crowned the same year. At the same time he repealed some of the most obnoxious laws that had been passed, not only for Hungary, but also for the Netherlands, Tyrol, and Bohemia. These concessions, however, came too late. The Hungarians only mocked at a ruler, who, when sore pressed, showed some lenity, when before that he had been utterly inflexible.

The indomitable spirit of this great ruler was at

last broken by disappointment, difficulties, and trials that pressed upon him from all sides; his health, for some time poor, now broke down entirely, and the weary soul took its flight on the 20th of February, 1790.

Thus the prince, whose reign had been welcomed with so much rejoicing, now died but little mourned. Greatly beloved at first for his liberality of thought, nobleness of character, and his earnest efforts to improve the condition of his subjects, he at last turned against himself even the hearts of his greatest devotees, when his interference in private affairs was carried beyond the limits of reason.

The peasants, however, whom he had rescued from a cruel servitude, loved him to the last, and for a long time refused to believe in his death.

In regard to personal appearance, Joseph II was a handsome man, of medium height, having a high forehead, and beautiful blue eyes. Although all acknowledged his goodness of heart and praised his simplicity of life, nevertheless, on account of his obstinacy and his domineering ways, he did not succeed in winning the permanent affection of his friends. Still, on account of his sympathy with the poor, his untiring labors to ameliorate their lot, his originality and energy in carrying out his reforms, and his conscientious performance of every duty of state, he is worthy to be regarded as the ablest and best ruler that ever sat upon the throne of the Hapsburgs.

LEOPOLD II.

The successor to Joseph II was his brother, known in history as Leopold II. No sooner had he assumed

the government than he announced his intention to renew the old State system; accordingly State Diets were called in all the countries composing his dominions. The delegates drew up their lists of grievances, and also suggestions as to the remedies.

In accordance with his promise, Leopold II repealed many of the decrees issued by his brother, especially those relating to the system of taxation, as well as those laws interfering in Church affairs and in the local affairs of towns and circuits. He partially acquiesced in the demands of the Bohemian Diet asking for the complete abolition of the innovations introduced by Maria Theresa and Joseph II. The Diet was granted the old privilege of voting taxes; but it was still left with the State authorities as to their mode of collection. In regard to their language, the Bohemians succeeded in having a chair of their tongue established in the university; but German still continued to be the language of instruction in the gymnasiums and higher institutions of learning.

In 1791, Leopold II was crowned with great splendor as King of Bohemia. On this occasion the crown was brought from Vienna to Prague, where it afterwards remained. The following year Leopold died, having reigned but two years.

The great evil that Leopold II did, for which he merits the curses of all mankind, was the re-establishment of servitude that his predecessor had with so much difficulty abolished. No words are adequate to express the dismay and despair of the poor peasants when compelled to return to the cruel tasks from which they believed they were forever freed.

FRANCIS I.

Leopold II was succeeded by his son Francis, who was crowned King of Bohemia in 1792.

During the first years of Leopold's reign, the Bohemian States continued in their efforts to regain their ancient rights and privileges. The French Revolution having broken out some time before, and Austria being involved in the wars that followed, Francis postponed all consideration of the demands of the States until after peace should again be restored.

In 1798, after the Peace of Campo Formio, Count Buquoi brought forward the question whether it was not time for the government to give its attention to this matter; but the suggestion passed unheeded, partly because the war broke out again, but mostly because the government had grown suspicious of all questions touching upon granting any liberties to the people. Indeed, after this time, when any one dared to lift his voice in behalf of liberty, he was at once arrested as trying to disseminate Jacobite heresies. Instead of granting any rights to the Diets, the government began to curtail those they already possessed. In 1800 it imposed a new tax upon the people, without so much as asking the consent of the Diet, the excuse being made that the urgency of the case demanded it. The government also used the new system of making State debts by issuing a paper currency; and when the burden of this debt crippled trade and wrought great confusion in wages and in the sale of property, the Financial Patent was issued (1811), declaring the value of the paper money to be one-fifth of its face. This

plunged the country into great misery, many people being reduced to bankruptcy and ruin.

The wars of the allies against France raged on, and although not carried on in Bohemia, they were not without their effects upon that country. In 1806, when the German princes made peace with Napoleon accepting his protection, the old confederation known as the German Empire was dissolved, and Francis I was obliged to lay down the title of German Emperor, and be content with the newly assumed one of Emperor of Austria. The effect of this upon Bohemia was, that it was freed from its ancient duty of furnishing 150 horse whenever the emperor went to Rome to be crowned, and the new duty imposed upon the country by Joseph I of contributing its quota to the imperial treasury, the Kingdom of Bohemia, as a matter of course, ceasing to be an electorate of the empire.

The influence of the French Revolution was felt among all European nations, who, taking courage from France, likewise began to demand more rights from their rulers. While danger threatened them from outside, they made many fair promises, which enabled them to raise troops to support their tottering thrones; but as soon as the danger was removed, these promises were forgotten, and the people groaned under as grievous a despotism as before.

The government of Francis I, in mortal terror lest some of the revolutionary principles should take root in the Austrian dominions, watched with a jealous eye every free movement and liberal expression of thought. The administration of law remained in the hands of the officials appointed by Joseph II, except that their

number was from time to time increased until the country endured innumerable evils from the fearful system of bureaucracy thus established. The land was also full of spies, through whose maliciousness many good men were seized and cruelly persecuted.

The government of the country at this time was rather the government of Prince Metternich than of Francis I; for this foreigner was the chief counselor of the emperor, and the despotic policy pursued was due entirely to his influence. The government of Joseph II had indeed been a despotism; but it was an enlightened and paternal despotism, while that of Francis I was blind, selfish, and oppressive in the extreme.

The other evils that afflicted the country during the reign of Metternich were the hard times coming at the close of the French wars; provisions were unusually high, and to this was added the Asiatic cholera that visited the country in 1847.

FERDINAND I.

Francis I died in 1835, and was succeeded by his son Ferdinand, who, as King of Bohemia, was the fifth of that name; but as Emperor of Austria, the first.

Ferdinand as a man was kind-hearted and magnanimous, and the people welcomed him as their sovereign with sincere joy; but owing partly to poor health, and partly to his disinclination to public life, he proved a most weak and inefficient ruler. He retained in his cabinet his father's counselors, among whom the most objectionable was the hated Prince Metternich. These advisers attempted to continue the old despotic system; but they soon found that it was no longer possible, for the liberty-loving spirit roused in France soon found

its way into Western Europe, and, notwithstanding all the efforts of the government to stifle it, made itself heard, filling the hearts of tyrants with alarm.

In Bohemia the awakening of national consciousness was also the direct cause of the awakening of the spirit of liberty. On all sides the people began to study their nation's history, and with this historical knowledge was awakened a desire to regain at least a part of the lost liberty.

During the reign of Ferdinand V the States tried on several occasions to regain some of their old rights and privileges, but in vain; the king's counselors being exceedingly loath to relax their grip upon the government. This hopeless struggle continued till 1848, when outside forces compelled the officials to begin a new policy.

MATERIAL AND INTELLECTUAL PROGRESS.

Before going on with the history of the Revolution of 1848, it will be well to take a brief survey of the progress made in Bohemia during the first half of the nineteenth century.

The century previous had been a time of great progress in all European nations. Old prejudices had vanished away, new theories and principles were fearlessly advanced; and on all sides there were indications that a new era had dawned for the human race. One of the peculiar features of the times was the free discussion and investigation of the natural rights of man, which came to be more and more recognized, especially during the reign of Joseph II. In his reign the impetus given to free inquiry was so great that it could not be stifled by the most stringent censorship of the press.

Side by side with the intellectual progress, there was a marked development of the natural resources of the country. The population had increased to 4,000,000 souls; the cultivation of the soil had greatly improved; factories arose on all sides, and many labor-saving machines were introduced. Through private enterprise, great buildings were undertaken, such as iron bridges, railroads, steamboats, and numerous public buildings. Prague increased in size, and so many elegant structures were put up as to render it almost a new city.

To further the progress in arts and science, various societies were organized. Among these was the Technical Institute in Prague, organized in 1802, the first of the kind in the Austrian dominions. In 1833 a society was formed whose aim was to help the smaller artisans by means of lectures, papers, and libraries. A national museum was established in 1893, and soon grew to such proportions as to necessitate the construction of a new building, which, in regard to the beauty of its architecture and its fine location, is one of the chief ornaments of the city of Prague.

As the country advanced in art and science, more and more attention began to be paid to the study of the native language, the foremost scholars of the land devoting to it their time and energies. Among the pioneer workers may be mentioned Pelcel, Procházka, and Kramarius. These were followed by Dobrovský, who investigated and established the laws of Bohemian grammar. Many scholars devoted themselves to composing original poems, or translating the masterpieces of other nations. Among these, the most illustrious was Joseph Jungman, whose excellent translation of

"Paradise Lost" was a vindication of the richness and flexibility of the Bohemian tongue. Jungman further did an inestimable service to his country by writing a dictionary, a work so scholarly, so exhaustive, that one can not but marvel how a single individual could ever have accomplished so prodigious a task, even though a lifetime were devoted to the work.

In 1817 the country was thrown into a furor of excitement by the discovery of some ancient specimens of Bohemian literature, known as the *Kralodvorský rukopis* (Queen's Court Manuscript). This was a collection of poems, written on twelve pieces of parchment, and supposed to date back as far as the thirteenth century. Some time after this, another manuscript was discovered at



JOHN KOLLAR,
Author of "Slava's Daughter."

Green Mountain, and hence called *Zelenohorský rukopis* (Green Mountain Manuscript), the writings of which date back to the ninth century. Although the authenticity of these manuscripts has been hotly contested, they exerted a powerful influence upon the development of the national literature. People began to appreciate a language that, at so early a period, had reached such a high degree of development as to be used in the construction of poems of so much literary merit.

This enthusiasm for the mother tongue doubtless awakened in many a scholar the desire to devote himself to its cultivation. Thus many authors arose, among whom the most distinguished were Kollár, Erben, Jablonský, and Čelakovsky. Kollár's *Slavý dcera* (Slava's Daughter), was the means of awakening much patriotic enthusiasm. Jablonský wrote many



FRANCIS L. ČELAKOVSKY.

didactic poems, that were much prized by the common people; Čelakovsky put into verse many ancient tales and folk superstitions; and Erben's numerous ballads, and collection of folk-songs are invaluable additions to the literature of the country.

Not only in literature, but likewise in science, the Bohemian language began to be used.

Presl and Kodym produced a number of works on natural science; Sedlaček, in mathematics; Marek, in philosophy; Palacký and Šafarik, in history. Palacký's "History of Bohemia" is a work that may stand beside the best histories of other nations; while Šafarik's "Slavonic Antiquities" is a standard authority in its department.

About this time there was started the paper *Casopis*

Musejní (Museum Journal), which is a grand repository of historical researches. In 1831 there was organized a society called *Matice Česká* (The Čech Mother), whose object is to publish, at cheap rates, books for the people; following this example, the Catholics organized a similar society called *Dědictví Svatojanské* (St. John's Heritage), their publications being mostly religious books. The government, not being able to withstand the pressure brought to bear upon it both by the people and patriotic statesmen, passed a law ordering that Bohemian should be taught in the gymnasiums, and that no one should be admitted to public office not conversant with the native tongue. This law, however, remained mostly a dead letter; for the officials, being creatures of the government, who knew full well what was desired, saw to it that the German language should remain in use, both in schools and public offices.



FRANCIS PALACKY,
Author of "History of Bohemia."

The national awakening, like all aggressive movements, was not without its accompanying evils; the greatest of which was the unnatural hatred arising between the two nationalities. The Germans, for long

years accustomed to regard Bohemia as a German province, and possessing an old-time antipathy to every thing Slavonic, looked with disfavor upon all attempts to resuscitate the Čech tongue. Indeed, in proportion as the zeal of the patriots increased, in that proportion the animosity of the Germans grew, until they became so reckless that they scrupled not to resort to the most malicious and dishonorable means to thwart the plans of their Bohemian neighbors. Some of them took the attitude that the country had always been a German State, and that the actions of the handful of Čechs was as if a party of invaders should enter the country, and try to force upon the natives their own peculiar customs and language.

Notwithstanding all the opposition encountered, both from the government and from private individuals, the good work went on; and as the patriots were the most cultured people of the land, the national awakening proved a source of intellectual advancement to all. There is no question that the marvelous progress that Bohemian literature is making at the present time is but the natural result of this movement.

THE REVOLUTION OF '48.

In the chapter on the reign of King Ferdinand V, or Ferdinand I of Austria, it was related how the States tried to win back some of their ancient liberties, but without success. In 1848 an event happened outside of the Austrian dominions that had a mighty influence, not only upon that country, but upon all Europe. This was the Revolution in France. The crafty Louis Philippe, refusing to introduce the reforms that the people demanded, was driven from his throne, and the country

declared a republic. The news of this Revolution spreading through the countries of Europe, created a great excitement. The people everywhere began to take heart, and to believe that the day of liberty had dawned for all nations. The various rulers, sore pressed,



FERDINAND V (The Good).

now granted their subjects many privileges, that nothing could force them to do before.

This example was not lost upon the people of Bohemia, who now saw an opportunity to make known their grievances, and seek redress with a reasonable hope of obtaining it. Some of the States met in Prague,

and passed resolutions, asking for the calling of a State Diet, which should propose bills for the needed reforms.

Before the above resolutions could be acted upon, some of the more courageous patriots sought another method of securing the desired end, which, indeed, was not according to law, but, on account of the urgency of the case, met with general approbation. They issued a proclamation to the people, asking them to meet in the hall of the St. Václav's baths on the 11th of March, to consider the question of drawing up a petition to the emperor. Such a meeting was held on the appointed day, and resolutions embodying the following principles were drawn up:

(1) Equality of the two nationalities; Bohemian and German, in schools, courts of justice, and in public offices.

(2) A united representation in the State Legislature of the three crown-lands, Bohemia, Moravia, and Silesia.

(3) A free local self-government.

(4) Equality of all religions.

(5) Independence and publicity of trials.

(6) Abolition of socage.

(7) Freedom of the press.

These resolutions were embodied in the three words which were taken as a motto during the revolution; viz., nationality, self-government, and political freedom.

In order that these resolutions might be properly drawn up and their scope explained, a committee of twenty-seven citizens was appointed for this task, consisting both of Germans and Bohemians, which, from the place of meeting, was called St. Václav's Committee. At this time the harmony between the two national-

ities was something phenomenal, and was a source of great joy to all good citizens. As the above meeting was conducted by some of the most influential citizens, the military did not interfere, although the troops were standing ready to be called out at a moment's notice.

While these things were going on in Prague, a revolution likewise broke out in Vienna, which, however, did not go off as peaceably as the one in Bohemia. The troops trying to break up the meeting of the people, a skirmish took place, in which several persons lost their lives. This seemed but to inflame the people so that their demands upon the government became all the more peremptory, until the emperor, to prevent further bloodshed, granted some concessions. He dismissed the hated Prince Metternich, abolished the censorship of the press, permitted the organization of a home guard, and promised to grant a constitution, for which a Diet was to be called composed of delegates from all the Austrian provinces except Hungary.

When the news that the emperor promised to grant a constitution reached Prague, the city was filled with rejoicings, the people in their enthusiasm imagining that the objects of the revolution were already secured.

The petition to the emperor being duly drawn up and signed by thousands of citizens, the deputation took its departure to Vienna to lay it before the emperor, which was done on the 19th of March.

The citizens of Prague, following the example of the Viennese, organized a home guard, to which the students were also admitted, forming the Academic Legion. The main object of this organization was to prevent the rabble from committing any acts of violence, as had been the case in Vienna. The St. Vác-

lav's Committee, taking special care to provide work and give aid to the poor, succeeded in preserving perfect order both in Prague and in other cities.

On the 27th of March the delegation returned to Prague. The whole city, in holiday attire, turned out to welcome the delegates and to hear what success they had met in Vienna. There being no hall large enough to accommodate the crowds of curious spectators, a meeting was called in the open air, by the statue of St. Václav, on the avenue of the same name. The archbishop and the attendant priests chanted a grand *Te Deum*, after which the chairman of the deputation read the decision of the emperor. Some of the demands had already been granted by the patents issued for the whole empire. Some he granted, the most important of which was the abolition of socage; and some he postponed for further consideration. From the report of the delegates it was evident that the government did not intend to grant to the Bohemians what they most desired; that is, home rule, or the privilege of being governed according to the ancient State law.

In the vast crowd assembled to hear the reading of the report, one idea took possession of all minds, and that was that the emperor was not sincere in regard to Bohemia; and the expression of joy that had but a moment before lighted every countenance, now was changed to one of sorrow and gloomy foreboding.

To allay the public discontent, another committee was appointed to draw up another petition to the court. A party of students demanded arms and ammunition from the imperial magazines, which Archduke Charles Ferdinand, the commander-in-chief, granted, wishing to

avoid a crisis, and also intrusted the care of the public peace to the newly-organized legions.

In the second petition the demands of the people were more explicitly set forth, and also some changes introduced. On account of the urgency of the case, this petition was not given to the people to sign; but the committee, instead, succeeded in obtaining the signature of Count Rudolph of Stadion, then the viceroy of the kingdom. The count—at first very reluctant to sign the petition, later on wishing to show his sympathy with the popular movement—himself appointed a special committee to discuss the needed reforms. At the same time the Bohemian nobility announced to St. Václav's Committee that they would not insist on their special privileges in the coming Diet. The second delegation to Vienna was there sustained by the action of some noblemen, who offered a similar petition with their own signatures.

At this time the city of Prague performed the first act of self-government. The mayor appointed by the government having resigned, the people elected the new aldermen, and Anton Strobach was thus chosen mayor.

The Vienna delegation returned the 11th of April, and gave the following report: The emperor promised to call a Diet, in which, besides the usual delegates, there were to be representatives from all the larger cities, and also some from the country districts; to appoint a regent as chief ruler in Bohemia; to declare the equality of the two languages—Bohemian and German. The union of Bohemia, Moravia, and Silesia was postponed for further consideration at the coming Diet. This re-

port, although not entirely satisfactory, quieted the minds of the people, since the promised Diet gave them a hope of obtaining the rest of their demands. Further developments, however, soon showed that the government was not sincere in its concessions, and that they were merely granted to relieve the momentary pressure. One of the proofs of this was the fact that the chief command was placed into the hands of Prince Windischgratz, a proud aristocrat, hated by the people of Vienna on account of his avowed enmity to the progressive spirit of the times.

The people of Moravia, at last roused out of their lethargy by the example of the sister State, now called a Diet, and also sent a delegation to the emperor. Some of their demands were also granted, among them the abolition of socage.

At the very time that a new day seemed to be dawning to the peoples composing the Austrian dominions, the empire itself was threatened with destruction. A delegation came from Hungary, and compelled the emperor to grant them an entirely separate and independent government. A few day after this, a revolution broke forth in Venice and Lombardy, the King of Sardinia coming to the assistance of these countries, to help them to win their independence. A similar uprising was put down by force of arms at Cracow.

But the greatest danger threatening the country was from Germany itself. Delegates from all the German States met at Frankfort, and demanded of their respective rulers a General Parliament of United Germany. Such a Parliament soon met, and proceeded to work out a form of union for the States represented, including, however, Austria, and with it Bohemia,

Moravia, and Silesia. In Vienna the enthusiasm for a united Germany was so great that the students, gathering in crowds before the royal palace, succeeded in forcing the German flag into the hands of the emperor. The Frankfort delegates invited Francis Palacký, the Bohemian historian, to represent his nation in the coming Parliament; but he declined the honor, regarding the movement dangerous both to Austria and Bohemia.

The Prime Minister Pillensdorf, carried away by every new excitement, and hardly able to withstand the pressure brought to bear upon him by the students and other visionaries, ordered elections to be held in all the Austrian provinces to choose delegates to the Frankfort Parliament.

This action put an end to the good feeling between the Germans and Bohemians in Prague. The former, incited by emissaries, began to suspect every movement that the Bohemians made in regard to their nationality as an act of hostility against themselves. There was a strong party in Prague in favor of the Frankfort Parliament, and when the St. Václav's Committee, now called the National, declared against it, the German members resigned, and formed another committee, styled the Constitutional Union. Messengers from Frankfort came to Prague, with the demand that the National Committee should adopt different views; and when it refused to do so, they went so far in their audacity as to threaten to compel them to do so at the point of the sword. This so roused the indignation of the people that the Bohemian students broke up the meeting of the Constitutional Union, which after that did not venture to hold its sittings publicly.

From this time on, Prague became the scene of

continual disturbances. The young people *charivariated* persons obnoxious to them, and the rabble, as usual, turned against the Jews, who only escaped being plundered, by the protection of the National Guard. The press, in the excitement of the times left free, abused its newly-gained liberty, indulging in all manner of lampoons, especially against the hated officials. The country people soon caught the spirit of the cities, and sought redress for many petty grievances by unlawful and violent measures.

The efforts of the Frankfort Parliament to form a union of all the Germanic States, absorbing within them the various Slavonic nations of Central Europe, gave rise to a counter assembly; viz., the Slavonic Congress.

The National Committee, seeing that the government at Vienna was either unable or unwilling to protect them from the insults of the German emissaries, issued a proclamation to the Slavonic nations in the Austrian dominions to meet at Prague to discuss matters of general interest.

The government, to make better provision for preserving order, appointed, in the place of Count Stadion, Count Leo Thun as chairman of the Executive Committee governing Bohemia. Count Thun, before this a member of the Executive Committee in Galicia, was a highly-popular man on account of his zeal for the national cause; consequently the people rejoiced at his appointment; but he disappointed the hopes placed in him. Neither he nor Mayor Strobach possessed that elasticity of mind that would enable them to adapt themselves to the solution of questions coming up every day from the excited populace. Strobach, becoming

discouraged amid the rising difficulties, resigned, and Count Thun soon lost all popularity.

The cause of most of the trouble was the instability of the central government. Desiring to keep the favor of all parties, especially of the students and the Germans favoring the Frankfort Parliament, the government broke the promise given the 15th of March, as well as the one given to the Prague delegation on the 8th of April, to arrange a State policy in accordance with the wishes of the several nations, and itself worked out a State system which utterly ignored the special needs of the countries constituting the Austrian Empire.

Neither the people of Prague nor those of Vienna were satisfied with the action of the government, and the latter soon expressed their indignation by violent means. Forcing their way into the royal palace, they compelled the emperor to give a promise that no State system should be adopted until the same had been formed at a General Diet composed of delegates chosen without any limitations as to the qualifications of the voters. Ferdinand, highly offended at this act of violence, left the capital, and took his departure to Innsbruck.

The news of this step created great consternation in Prague. The National Committee, the city of Prague, and other corporations, sent out deputations to the emperor, assuring him of their loyalty.

The vacillating policy of the Viennese ministry made it lose so much prestige that Count Thun, on his own responsibility, issued letters of election for members to the State Diet; but, with a strange inconsistency, also issued similar letters for the election of delegates to the Frankfort Parliament. However, little

harm was done. The Bohemian citizens did not vote, and the German ones only in the towns along the boundaries. Prague itself cast only three votes. Count Thun further showed his independence of the ministry by associating with himself in the government several distinguished citizens; namely, Palacký, Rieger, Borrosche, Brauner, Strobach, and Counts Nostic and Wurmbbrand. Rieger and Nostic were sent to Innsbruck to ask the emperor to sanction the policy of Thun, and to appoint a day for the calling of the Bohemian Diet.

The ministry was much offended at the actions of Count Thun, regarding them as an attempt to secure the independence of the country; and it demanded that the election to the State Diet be postponed until after the general election. The count, instead of complying with the request, postponed the elections to the Frankfort Parliament, which so exasperated the members of the ministry, that he was asked to resign his office.

In the meantime, the Slavonic Congress met in Prague, June 2d. As might be expected, the occasion was seized by the more ardent patriots to hold a grand Slavonic holiday. There were parades, illuminations, meetings for the expression of brotherly regard, high mass held in the old Slavonic dialect, a grand congregational singing of the ancient Slavonic hymn, *Gospodine pomilujny* ! (Lord, have mercy upon us!) and, what was of most importance, meetings of the most distinguished men as to mutual needs of the nations represented.

As the doings of the Frankfort Parliament had filled the minds of the Bohemians with fear, and that with

cause, so now the Germans looked at this Congress, with all the Slavonic demonstrations, with a feeling akin to terror. They imagined it to be but the outcropping of a vast panslavistic plot, aimed against the Germans of the Austrian dominions. And yet the central idea of the Congress was the necessity of preserving intact the unity of the Austrian empire.

The Congress drew up a manifesto to all European nations, explaining the true condition of the Slavonic nations; and a petition to the emperor, showing their common and special needs and desires; and an agreement to aid each other in all ways consistent with the laws of the land and the well-being of the nations in the empire.

Unfortunately, before the work of the Congress was finished, a storm burst over the city that scattered the delegates, prevented the meeting of the State Diet, and, in fact, proved the death-blow to the newly-born liberty.

When Prince Windischgratz obtained the command of the army in Prague, he at once determined to do all in his power to thwart the labors of the patriotic citizens. To this end he kept up a constant correspondence with the ministry in Vienna, as well as an understanding with some of the conservative citizens, who longed for the old order of things to return. At first he tried to overawe the people by indulging in various military demonstrations, that were not at all in harmony with the existing state of affairs. Finally a report was circulated that a plot was under way on the part of the military against the citizens, which filled the minds of the people with terror. A crisis occurred on the 12th of June, when the people

were returning from a grand mass held by the statue of St. Václav, on St. Václav's Avenue. At the close of the service, when the people dispersed, a crowd, composed mostly of students, turned in the direction of the Powder Tower, and passed the residence of the commander-in-chief. Just as they came near the place, they were met by a band of soldiers with drawn bayonets, who ordered them to turn back. In the skirmish that followed, several persons were left dead and many more wounded. The crowd, being totally unarmed, scattered in all directions.

As soon as they recovered from the panic, the students, following the example of those of Vienna, called to arms, and began to build barricades across the streets. The troops, gathering from all sides, attempted to dislodge them, and thus the city was plunged into the horrors of civil war. By evening of the same day, the barricades were all in the hands of the soldiers, and many students were taken prisoners. The attacking side, however, mourned the loss of several officers, as well as quite a number of private soldiers, and the death of Princess Windischgratz, who was shot by a stray bullet, presumably while looking out of the window.

The next day, the city authorities asked Prince Windischgratz for a cessation of hostilities, which request he agreed to grant on condition that the barricades be removed; but as the people refused to do this, the day passed in uncertainty. During the disturbance, Count Thun had been taken prisoner by the students, but was released the following day. During the night the soldiers left the city, drawing with them the cannon, the wheels of which were muffled with straw. The

next morning the people saw with consternation that the Hradschin was in possession of Windischgratz, and therefore that the city was entirely at his mercy.

In the morning, Windischgratz declared the city in a state of siege, and threatened to bombard it if the authorities refused to surrender in the time given them. The people, roused to indignation by such treachery, refused to surrender, and instead commenced to attack the Small Side. Thereupon the commander made good his threat, and commenced discharging his cannon into the Old Town. Some of the more moderate citizens then succeeded in obtaining an armistice; but when some more stray shots were fired after the cessation of hostilities, the bombardment was at once resumed, and several large buildings near the bridge were set afire.

The next day, the city was compelled to surrender unconditionally. The soldiers then re-entered the city, and Windischgratz began to arrest all suspected persons, especially those that had been members of the National Committee. A report being spread by the Royalists that there was a great Slavonic plot against the ruling house, many persons were arrested and tried, in the attempt to discover the leaders of the conspiracy. But as there was no plot, the court did not succeed in unearthing it, although it did succeed in causing a great deal of trouble and annoyance to some of the most worthy citizens.

Thus the reactionary policy was successfully introduced in Prague, and from that time on, the revolution declined, and the government gradually relapsed into its old despotism.

In a few days after the surrender of Prague to Prince Windischgratz, the elections for the General Diet

were held, the election for the Bohemian Diet being indefinitely postponed. There was, therefore, nothing left to the National party but to send as able men as possible to Vienna, who should do what they could to secure for their nation some of the promised reforms.

The General Diet met in Vienna, July 18th. In the sessions, the Bohemian delegates held firmly to the principle, Equality to all nations in the Austrian monarchy, and the inviolability of the unity of the empire. The German delegates, finally becoming convinced that the policy advocated by the friends of the Frankfort Parliament would lead to the complete dissolution of the Austrian Empire, adopted the policy of the Bohemians, and also voted measures to prevent the secession of Hungary from the monarchy.

The progress made by the Diet in the working out of the needed reforms was very slow; but by the end of August the law relative to the abolition of socage was completed, and Ferdinand, returning to Vienna at this time, signed it, September 7th.

The party favoring the Frankfort Parliament, seeing that it was baffled in its designs, attempted to win its object by violence. Uniting with the Magyars in the city, they commenced a bloody revolution. Holding a special grudge against the ministry, they seized Latour, the Minister of War, and hanged him, and Bach escaped a similar fate by flight. Ferdinand again left the city, and the Imperial Diet, hindered in its proceedings by the angry mob, was soon obliged to adjourn, the delegates leaving the city and returning to their homes.

In this crisis, when Vienna was entirely in the power of a mob that favored Germany, the Austrian empire

was saved from destruction through the assistance of a Slavic general. This was the brave Jelcic, the Ban of Croatia, who at this time was trying to protect the Croatians from the tyranny of the Magyars. Hearing of the revolution of Vienna, he at once started to the help of the government forces. Reaching Vienna from one side, while Windischgratz coming from Bohemia, advanced to it from the opposite direction, the two armies attacked the city and soon compelled it to surrender. After punishing some of the leaders by death, the two generals turned against Hungary, and although they did not succeed in subjugating the country, they met with considerable success, which greatly encouraged the government. This, however, instead of being a blessing proved a great evil; for the government, gaining courage by the removal of the dangers, immediately returned to its reactionary policy.

When the Diet, so to speak, was driven from Vienna, the delegates decided to continue the sessions elsewhere, and as the emperor had fled to Moravia, the Moravian town of Kremsier was selected for this purpose.

In a few days after the meeting of the Diet, Ferdinand, discouraged by the difficulties surrounding him, resigned his crown in favor of his nephew, Francis Joseph, December 1, 1848.

FRANCIS JOSEPH.

The Diet in Kremsier proceeded with its work, and soon drew up a system of government that was thoroughly democratic. But while the discussions were going on, the government had not been idle. In secret it had also drawn up a system of government, and to

the amazement of the delegates brought forward the new constitution, announced it as the future law of the land, and on the same day dissolved the Diet, March 4, 1849.

According to the new constitution, the whole empire was to have a Parliament, or Reichsrath, composed of two Houses, the Higher House to be composed of



FRANCIS JOSEPH I.

prominent citizens who paid a tax of not less than 500 florins, the Lower House of delegates chosen by the people. The proposed Legislature was to have almost complete control of all matters relating to the realm, leaving but a nominal power to the State Diets. None of the States were satisfied with this peremptory method of settling the question; but they

were now too weak to rebel against the established order.

In the meantime the new ministry began to work out a system of government that should, to some extent, fulfill the wishes of the people as expressed in their petitions of the previous year. The towns were granted a new system, leaving them considerable liberty in regard to local government.

Count Thun, minister of ecclesiastical and educational matters, wrought many improvements in both

the common schools and higher institutions of learning. The university obtained a more liberal system of administration; the gymnasiums were remodeled after those of Prussia, and many Real schools were also organized. In the lower schools Bohemian was made the language of instruction.

Knight Schmerling, Minister of Justice, established a new system of procedure in courts of justice. The trials were to be public, the proceedings oral, and there was to be a jury.

For some time it seemed that the ministry had a sincere desire to introduce the needed reforms; but this favorable state of affairs was of short duration. As in the old days during the Hussite wars, when the people compelled the princes of the world to give them a fair hearing by working according to the motto, *Vexatio dat intellectum*, so it seems that as long as the officers of the government were harassed by disturbances and uprisings on all sides, their intellect was clear and they were ready to enter upon a policy that would have brought harmony and prosperity to the nations composing the monarchy; but no sooner was the "vexatio" removed, than the government lost its wisdom and relapsed into its old despotic ways.

To the close of the year 1848 the Hungarians were completely subjugated. General Radecky, the gray-haired Bohemian veteran, won a glorious victory over the King of Sardinia, which resulted in the restitution to the empire of Venice and Lombardy. The Prussians were also compelled to make a treaty, wherein the relations between the two countries remained the same as before. These victories had the effect of turning the government from its liberal policy. If arms

could do so much in the subjugation of rebellious nations, why could they not be the means of restoring the old order of affairs?

This conclusion being reached, the ministry began in a most unscrupulous manner to carry into effect their reactionary measures. About this time, Dr. Bach became the chief adviser of the emperor, and the evils of the policy introduced may be traced directly to his influence. The head of the government was Bach rather than Francis Joseph. The carrying out of the reforms that had been worked out by the other ministers was obstructed in various ways, until they became a dead letter. Other measures that had already been put into use were rescinded, with a promise that something better was in preparation; but the people waited in vain for the something better to come. Thus it was with the local system of self-government. This was soon replaced by that of State officers; and, indeed, State officers and *gens d'armes* swarmed everywhere until there was a system of bureaucracy far more frightful than during the most despotic times under Joseph II. Public trials and the jury were alike abolished, the courts of justice being entirely in the hands of creatures of the government.

To prevent the people from expressing their discontent, there was a most rigid censorship of the press. The Bohemian nation that, during the revolutionary period, had shown such loyalty to the reigning house, seemed now to be the special object of its suspicions. No Bohemian newspaper was allowed to be published, except one that the government itself gave out. But the worst feature of all this was, that many innocent men, being suspected of liberal views, were tried by

the imperial courts of justice, and often sent to long years of imprisonment, where they either died or broke down in health as a result of cruel treatment. Among the most illustrious victims was Charles Havlíček, a patriot and statesman, who for some satire written against the government, was sent to a fortress in Tyrol, where he died. This oppressive policy for a while arrested the progress the Bohemian people had been making in their national awakening. The patriots, seeing all their earnest labors brought to naught, became disheartened, and for a while it seemed that the country would again relapse into Germanism. But the nation roused itself from this lethargy even before the fall of the ministry whose unfriendly policy was the chief cause of it.



CHARLES HAVLÍČEK.

The government of Bach fell, because its principles were contrary to the real state of affairs in the monarchy. To keep up such a system of military and bureaucratic rule required an enormous expenditure of money, which Austria could by no means furnish, the burdens of taxation having become almost unbearable. And, notwithstanding all this, the military policy of the government was by no means successful. In

its war with Sardinia, by the defeat at Magenta and Solferino, it lost the beautiful province of Lombardy.

Finally Francis Joseph realized that the State policy pursued was the real cause of the misfortunes that had overtaken the empire, and consequently he determined to pursue a new policy. In 1859 he issued a manifesto to his nations, promising to work radical reforms, both in the administrative and judicial departments of the government, and the following year he dismissed the obnoxious Bach from the ministry. A new Reichsrath was called, the number of delegates being increased. The chief work of the Reichsrath was to consider the financial state of the empire, and to propose some remedy. In July of the same year the emperor agreed, out of his own free-will, not to raise the taxes nor impose any loans, except with the consent of the Reichsrath. In the fall of 1860 he issued an unrepealable diploma, agreeing that henceforth all the nations composing the Austrian empire shall be duly represented in the general government.

It seemed now that the government had really initiated a policy that would lead to the liberty and prosperity of all the nations in the Austrian dominions. But reforms move slowly. Bohemia to this day is struggling to secure the rights and privileges which are included under the State law that it had been ruled by in former times—a law guaranteed it by the coronation oath of all the rulers of the house of Hapsburg, but also violated by most of them. The Bohemian nation desires liberty, equality, and nationality, and does not mean to give up the struggle until these demands are secured.

